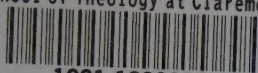


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LIGHT AND LEAVEN

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SERMONS TO GENERAL
CONGREGATIONS

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LIGHT AND LEAVEN

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SERMONS
TO GENERAL CONGREGATIONS

BY

H. HENSLEY HENSON, M.A.

FELLOW OF ALL SOULS' COLLEGE, OXFORD
INCUMBENT OF S. MARY'S HOSPITAL, ILFORD
SOMETIME VICAR OF BARKING

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TO
MY FRIENDS
AND FORMER COLLEAGUES

W. W. CLARKE
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H. R. PHILLPOTTS
S. G. SAMPSON
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APOLOGY FOR PUBLICATION

THIS volume contains the relics of two controversies, but for the most part it is not controversial. It is published for two immediate reasons. The first is purely personal. In the spring of last year I brought to a close my share of a correspondence in the columns of the *Guardian* on "The Christian Social Union" by promising, in deference to much pressure of a friendly sort, to publish a small book on the questions in debate between me and that society. This promise has not yet been fulfilled, nor can this volume pretend to be an adequate fulfilment. But I must plead a growing reluctance to deal in a controversial way with the complex and difficult subject of Social Christianity, and a desire to watch the development of "Christian Socialism" before resuming the rôle of critic, or adopting the more congenial character of a sympathetic observer. Though, however, this volume cannot pretend to satisfy my obligation, yet it does go some way towards doing so. By bringing together the History of Christianity and the discussion of social questions a principle is asserted.

The neglect of experience is surely the first condition of practical blundering, and whether that experience be accumulated in the form of Economic Law, or of Ecclesiastical History, the wise servant of his own generation will defer to it. Such deference is not common among the ardent disciples of Socialism, whether Christian or not; and to this fact must be ascribed the extravagances to which I have felt it my duty to oppose a steady and consistent resistance.

The second reason is not entirely personal. This volume contains sermons preached under circumstances of some interest, and many persons have not ceased to ask me to publish them, partly as memorials of experiences in which they also shared, partly as illustrations of an unusual type of discourse. The history of the "Gasworkers' Sermons" is related below, and does, in my judgment, serve to show, more clearly perhaps than any formal discussion, the impossibility of maintaining a pedantically strict exclusion of "secular" subjects from the parish priest's pulpit. At the same time I think those sermons did not transgress that boundary line of absolute impartiality, which the parish priest must loyally respect if he is not to compromise, perhaps irrecoverably, his spiritual position. The historical sermons owe their origin to the proselytizing zeal of the Roman Church in my immediate neighbourhood. They are necessarily controversial in one sense,

since they conflict with opposing presentments of the facts they relate; but in another sense I hope they are not controversial. I have endeavoured to be loyal to the whole truth, and to avoid unnecessarily exasperating language. The fact that these discourses were delivered from the pulpit in the course of divine service necessarily imposed restraints which perhaps on the platform might have been discarded. The Roman controversialists are accustomed to adopt with reference to the Church of England a tone of contemptuous violence, which is hard to bear, but which can only be resented with great risk of loss. In religious controversy assuredly the word of S. James is found to be true, "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." The extreme hostility of our Roman opponents suggests perhaps a consciousness of failure. The worst injury which it can inflict on the English Church is the contagion of its evil example.

These sermons will at least possess the recommendation of appositeness. The commemoration of S. Augustine's arrival has directed general attention to the beginnings of Christianity in these islands, and one more brief review of that famous history may not be unacceptable. In publishing these sermons I have a further purpose in view. It has often occurred to me that the parish priest might increase the religious value of his labours

in the pulpit by extending the range of his teaching. These historical sermons, and others of a similar kind, were welcomed by the congregations to which they were addressed, and I would respectfully suggest to the clergy the wisdom of, in this respect, following my example. The "Gasworkers' Sermons," and the course of historical discourses on the early Christianity of these islands, constitute well-defined groups; they are linked by a few selected discourses which deal with the same or kindred subjects, and tend to give a measure of completeness to a necessarily disjointed volume.

Finally, it matches my present purpose to have these discourses as far as possible in their original shape. I have cut out nothing but some parochial references and appeals, which can now have no interest or relevance.

H. H. H.

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INTRODUCTION

THE discourses here presented to the public were mostly addressed to mixed congregations either in the old Parish Church of Barking, or in the Chapel of the Hospital at Ilford. They must be judged in the light of their purpose. While it is certainly true that the subjects discussed in them have largely engaged my attention during the last ten years—and I must therefore be rigorously held responsible for the soundness of the opinions and the accuracy of the facts set out in these pages—yet the reader will not expect either elaborate reasoning or profound learning in compositions written amid the distractions of active parochial charge, conceived with a practical purpose, and addressed to busy and, in these respects, uneducated people.

It has been my misfortune to find myself opposed to the movement conveniently described as Christian Socialist, and sufficiently represented by the Christian Social Union: in some sense that opposition explains the discourses which refer to the social aspects and obligations of discipleship. The

four "Labour Sermons" are printed partly in response to very general request, partly for the exceptional interest of the circumstances under which they were originally delivered. They are published without alteration, in spite of the fact, which is apparent, that the practical issues with which they dealt are local or obsolete, or both. My C. S. U. critics have on more than one occasion referred to these sermons as evidences of my inconsistency, if not of my hypocrisy. They seem to find difficulty in reconciling my opposition to Christian Socialism with my conduct in preaching sermons on "questions of the day." The difficulty will, I think, hardly survive in the mind of anyone who will condescend to read the following explanation: On October 4th, 1891, I had preached a sermon to a very large congregation assembled in the Parish Church on the occasion of the Harvest Festival. Most parish priests will sympathize with my attempt to "buy up the opportunity" provided by one of the very few services which working people attend in large numbers. My sermon was in no respects unusual, but it attracted an unusual measure of attention, and as it led to a change of relation between me and the mass of my parishioners I have included it in this volume. A few days after preaching that sermon I received the following letter from the Secretary of the local branch of the Gasworkers and General Labourers' Union:—

"DEAR SIR,

"I am directed to write and ask if you will preach a sermon for the members of the Barking Branch of the above Union from the following text: 'Every labourer is worthy of his hire,' and that you show us, if you can, in your sermon that he gets it. Since last evening I have been trying to find this text, but I cannot. I have referred to Luke x. 7 and 1 Timothy v. 18, but they do not touch the question. What our chairman maintains is this: that the labourer does not get proper recompense for his labour. Any Sunday evening at the Parish Church this or next month will do.

"I am, dear sir,

"Your obedient servant."

On inquiry I learned that this letter had been the result of an angry discussion of my above-mentioned sermon, and represented anything rather than an ardent desire to go to church, or a real intention to do so. I returned the following answer:—

"DEAR MR. —

"I need hardly assure the members of the Gasworkers and General Labourers' Union that I shall be very pleased to welcome them in the Parish Church either individually or on parade. But I am a little puzzled at the form in which a request, in itself a reasonable and, from my point of view, acceptable one, is couched. The text referred to in the resolution is, I suppose, taken from our Saviour's instructions to the seventy disciples, of which record is preserved in S. Luke x. 7. The context clearly shows that our Lord was referring to the right of His ministers to be maintained during their ministry. The complete passage runs thus: 'And in that same house remain eating

and drinking such things as they give ; for the labourer is worthy of his hire.'

"So much for the suggested text : now for the condition with which it is coupled. 'Hire' is, I suppose, wage agreed upon between employer and workman, and it cannot be questioned that, except in very few cases, the workman gets *that*. The hire may be small, but it is generally pretty secure.

"However, I think I can see what the resolution is driving at. The members of the Union think that labour does not receive a fair recompense, a fair proportion, of the proceeds of industry. In the partnership of labour and capital, which production requires, they think the lion's share goes to the latter. Why they should suppose that I have any wish to show that they are mistaken I cannot imagine. If they were regular attendants at the Parish Church they would know that I regard the existing state of society as profoundly unsatisfactory, and that I am never tired of insisting on an honest recognition of the rights of others, whether employers or workmen, as an essential part of Christian morals. Scamped work and stinted wages seem to me equally condemned by the golden rule of Christ : 'As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.' (S. Luke vi. 31.)

"I cannot, therefore, undertake to show what is on one view of the resolution obvious, and on the other, in my opinion, untrue. But if the members of the Union will come to church, I will gladly preach to them on 'Christianity and Labour Disputes,' or some such subject. I should suggest November 8th, at 4 p.m., as the best time. We could have the church to ourselves without incommoding the ordinary congregation. Please assure the members of my goodwill,

"And believe me, yours very sincerely,

"H. HENSLEY HENSON."

The members, however, insisted on their text, and I yielded. The scene in church on the 8th November will never be effaced from my memory.

A vast concourse of men assembled at the church fully half an hour before the time of service, and thronged every corner of the building. A row of Salvationists characteristically sat on the step before the communion rail, and piled their instruments within the sanctuary; their bright uniform had a singularly picturesque effect. A great crowd stood up the aisles, in the porch, far out into the churchyard; hundreds went away from the church gates in despair of getting within earshot of the pulpit.

The choir stalls were abandoned to the invaders, and the choir stood round the altar. So close was the attention that not one man of that great multitude stirred from his place until the service was ended. The crucifix was borne in procession, and as we slowly crept up the aisle the singing of the choir was drowned by the thunderous unison of the congregation. I have never heard such singing before or since. A thousand service-papers were distributed, but were far too few. It is calculated that not less than 1300 men were inside the building, besides those who gathered about the entrances. The sermon was listened to with an almost *ravenous* attention. Occasionally there were audible comments, and once a burst of applause, but there was no disorder or friction from beginning to end.

The exertion of preaching sent me to bed for a fortnight. For some days after the sermon the music-hall ditties were replaced on the Beckton works by the hymns sung during the service. That service changed the attitude of the working men towards me. They did not, indeed, in any large numbers flock to church, and at intervals they and I came into collision as before; but we had henceforward something in common, and I think they felt that I was thinking for them. Even now I am sometimes hailed by working men in quite unexpected places, who remind me of the great occasion. The service became an annual institution, and was continued until my resignation of the benefice. On every occasion my text was chosen for me by the local committee of the Union. I have related the history of these sermons at such length, because it illustrates far more clearly than any words the view I have maintained and acted on as to the clergyman's duty in respect to social disputes. He cannot be indifferent; he ought to be interested; he must not be a combatant. If occasion arises he should be ready to come forward to urge those considerations of justice and mercy, which so easily slip out of men's minds in the ardour of conflict. He must never pose as an authority on matters lying outside the sphere of his commission, but as a prominent citizen he ought to be able to assist his neighbours with his opinion if they seek such

help from him. Above all, he must withstand the tendency, which ever grows more powerful in the social sphere, to use coercion in the interest of advocacy. Few people realize how exposed to tyranny individuals in urban districts commonly are. The law can do little to protect the shopkeeper from the malignant hostility of a Labour Union, which may easily force him either to retire from all share in civic politics, or to act against his judgment and conscience. I do not doubt that working men suffer much oppression at the hands of officials and employers. I am sure that with great advantage to the community as a whole their share in the total output of productive labour might be largely increased; but I am more than ever convinced, after ten years' continuous residence in districts mainly inhabited by working men, that the most serious oppression which burdens artizan life is that which is inflicted by the men upon one another, and that the worst foe to their social liberty arises from the strengthening habit of coercion, to which I have referred. The Church of Christ should be vigilant against the contagion of that habit: freedom, in that noblest sense which merges it in law, should find championship in every Christian conscience. There are, unhappily, but too many signs that freedom is discredited in the judgment of social reformers; yet it remains the condition of all real progress.

The Historical Sermons explain themselves. The references to the modern Roman claims were necessitated by the proselytizing energy of the Roman Church in this neighbourhood. How far that energy has been rewarded by success it is difficult to say ; yet this I think it may be well to say : the Roman Church is the most perfect proselytizing machine now in existence. Its advocates permit themselves a hardihood of assertion and an indifference to historical accuracy which, happily, are still exceptional among their Anglican opponents. The Roman clergy would seem to be trained under conditions which are not favourable to controversial rectitude. It is an old story, and I need not dwell on it. But this should be remembered. Modern conditions are very favourable to the Roman methods. The Board Schools have created a generation which is sufficiently intelligent to be curious, and sufficiently educated to be vain. It is extremely ignorant of religious truth, and no longer protected by that formidable anti-Popery fanaticism which swayed the middle classes until recently. I apprehend that the Roman presentment of Catholic truth finds easy access into the minds of this "educated proletariat." It is uncriticised by better information, and unweighted by hostile prejudice. It has a plausibility, an apparent coherence, an air of assurance, which are very taking, and which may not improbably secure for it in the immediate future a very general acceptance.

It seems to me, therefore, equally desirable and timely to make the pulpit a medium of instruction in Church History. If I may judge from the experiments which I have myself attempted, the average congregation will not resent an occasional change from the established type of sermon. But the appeal to history must be an honest appeal, and if we exchange theology for history the history must be accurate. How far these conditions have been fulfilled in these discourses it is not for me to say; yet I may say that at least they were composed in full consciousness of the perils which beset such compositions, and with an earnest desire to "speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Finally, I repeat that it is not without design that in this volume social questions are discussed together with the history of the Church. It is my firm conviction that the problems of the present can only be understood in the light of the past; and that, therefore, the best hope of reaching any solution of those problems must be based on habitual reference to the accumulated experience of men, which is history. It should be the constant object of every social student, first to accustom himself to regard the social difficulties which immediately confront him in their historic connexions, and then to exert himself to induce the same habit in everyone else.

H. HENSLEY HENSON.

PART I.

HISTORICAL

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY OF CHURCH HISTORY

*Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity, November 4th, 1894,
in S. Margaret's.*

"My delight was with the sons of men."—PROVERBS viii. 31.

ALL SAINTS is pre-eminently the festival of the Past. The Church glances backwards over her history, and marks the heroes of the spiritual conflict who have maintained the cause of Truth in times of crisis and peril. She gathers up the records of ancient times, and lifts up her heart in praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God. I desire to speak to you briefly this morning on the importance of Church History, the duty of studying Church History, the grave danger attaching to ignorance of Church History. I have prefaced my sermon by a sentence from the famous 8th chapter of the book of Proverbs. That chapter has for its subject the works of the Divine Wisdom, of which the material universe is declared to be the faithful reflection. The order of human society, the arts of wise government, are but emanations from that source. Especially, indeed, are we to seek the evidences of that Divine and Gracious Power in the

affairs of men. Wisdom declares that in the Creation she presided as "*a master workman*"; but not in the physical universe does her mind find freest expression.

"*My delight was with the sons of men.*" Here is the fundamental cause of the unique value of historical studies. If you believe in the Being and Providence of God, if you believe that the Creator has intercourse with His highest creatures, and uses them for the accomplishment of His designs, then you approach the history of Man with sentiments of profound reverence and awful interest. This long procession of facts is not as chaotic as it seems. Look more closely, and you shall see in all directions the signs of guiding intelligence. Take a more distant standpoint, where the course of the centuries shall stretch before your view, and you shall discern the outlines of Eternal Projects. God is in it, more manifestly than in nature, for His contact with human wills is closer. He works—if I may dare the phrase—through kindred agencies, when He works through the Agency of Man. This observation applies to all history, as well secular as sacred; nay, from this point of view there is no distinction between secular and sacred; all the history of humanity is sacred, a slow unrolling of the purpose of the Almighty. A great philosopher has credited the Jew with the splendid function of asserting this conception of human history:

"As the Greek interfused the Divine Essence through the cosmic space, so did the Jew follow the divine footsteps down the tracks of historic

time, and make the course of history a highway for his God.”*

This great task was performed by the power of the Jew's conviction that he himself represented a special purpose of Almighty God. The idea of universal Divine Direction grew out of, and never superseded, the idea of his national election. Jehovah was, indeed, the God of the whole earth; but his home was in Israel. He stood towards Israel in a closer relationship. He was Israel's God. It is, indeed, remarkable that side by side with the intense conviction of the national election the wider notion was able to exist. The prophet Amos frankly attributes to Jehovah the migrations of Philistines and Syrians, as well as the migration of Israel. *“Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?”* Certainly the argument, as it appeals to our minds, cannot be content with anything less than a universal conclusion. No corner of human experience can be excluded from the sphere of Action of the Divine Wisdom. In every human breast burns *the candle of the Lord*, kindled from that *Light which lighteth every man coming into the world*.

Yet while this is beyond question, we Christians believe that in the history of Israel, and in that which is the true continuation of the history of Israel, the history of the Christian Church, there has been working a special Divine Energy, shaping

* MARTINEAU, *Seat of Authority*, p. 119.

events towards particular ends of the highest consequence. So strongly do we believe this, that we utterly repudiate the notion that the history of Israel can ever become empty of significance to Christians. We take up the records of that history with the conviction that we shall be able to trace in them the Divine Purpose which found its conspicuous expression in the life of Jesus Christ. We read the literature of Israel with the veneration which belongs to sacred writings inspired of God, because we have the authority of our Lord for saying that in that literature we shall find a true revelation of the Almighty. It may be true—it evidently is true—that the Hebrew literature has experienced the same fortunes, been produced under the same limitations, as those which attach, and must attach, to all human compositions. The *treasure* of Divine Revelation *is in earthen vessels*; but that circumstance only brings into greater distinctness its essential Divineness. So the argument stands thus: Human history is the revelation of the mind of God. Hebrew history is the revelation of a Divine purpose, the supreme character of which is determined by that which was the true outcome of the history—the fact of the Incarnation. That fact is the starting-point of Church History and its key. Church History is the record of the secular work of God the Holy Ghost. Read the Book of the Acts, the earliest chapter of Christian history. It begins with the coming of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost; it continuously speaks of the Holy Ghost as directing the action of the apostles,

planning the policy of the Church, inspiring not alone the hearts but also the intelligence of disciples. Indeed it has been said, not altogether inaptly, that as the Gospels give the history of God the Son in the world, so does the Book of the Acts give that of God the Holy Ghost. We Christians believe that the visible Church is the temple of God the Holy Ghost. That is the reason why we link together in the Creed the article which declares belief in the Holy Ghost with that which declares belief in the Church. "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church." It is manifestly an absurd supposition that the value and interest of Church History ended with the lives of the apostles. The Holy Ghost has been as really active in the Church in the following centuries as in that first century. He is as really active in the Church to-day as then. How unreasonable, then, is the neglect of Church History which obtains among modern Christians! You read the history of Israel, you read the Book of the Acts, and then you read nothing more about the history of the Church, unless, perhaps, you take in a religious newspaper. Ask an averagely intelligent, devout Churchman about Abraham, or David, or Isaiah, and you will get an intelligent answer, for he will know his Old Testament well. Ask him about S. Peter and Barnabas, and the Council of Jerusalem, and the splendid labours of S. Paul, and again you will get an intelligent answer, for he regularly studies his New Testament. But speak to him of the Imperial Persecutions, of Constantine, of the great

General Councils which formulated the old faith, of the honoured Fathers of Antiquity—Cyprian and Athanasius, Basil, Hilary, Chrysostom, Augustine, Gregory—of the wonderful missions which conquered for Christ the nations of Europe, of the labours of the Irish saints, of the English missionaries in Germany, of that marvellous Mediæval Church which schooled the barbarians of Europe into the ways of Christian civilization, of the prophets of the Middle Ages—S. Bernard, S. Hugh, S. Anselm, and later, John Wycliffe, and Huss—I say speak to him of all the history of Christ's Church for fifteen centuries, and he will know little more, if so much as the names. Surely this is both illogical and discreditable.

It is also spiritually perilous. In the first place, when ignorance of Church History is so profound, the Church is exposed to grievous risks of fraud. This is what has happened in the Church of Rome. Do you suppose if the average members of that Church had known anything of Church History they could ever have accepted the monstrous dogmas of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin and of the Papal Infallibility? Those who did possess a knowledge of Church History opposed, and in some cases repudiated those dogmas; but the vast mass of Roman Catholics knew absolutely nothing about the history of the Church. They were fearful—and justly fearful—of setting up their private judgment against what seemed to be the voice of *the Body of Christ*, and so they never detected the grossness of the errors which were thrust upon them.

We may see the same danger working evil results among the more fanatical Dissenters. Do you suppose that if they had a knowledge of Christian history they could possibly acquiesce in the grotesque errors which now hold them fast? Those errors—the characteristic sect-doctrines of Protestant fanaticism—are in nearly every case ancient heresies come to life again. There is hardly a sect in England to-day which does not possess its counterpart in the past. Absolutely ignorant of Church History, these fatuous Christians are deprived of the warnings of experience, helpless in the hands of the latest and loudest talker. I believe it is true that we of the Church of England are better acquainted with Church History than the members of any other Church or of any sect outside the Church; and, indeed, we have need to be, for the Church of England justifies her position by the appeal to history. The Roman Catholic has an authority at his elbow from whose decisions he must not appeal—an infallible Pontiff. The fanatic has an authority on his shelf whose sentence, as interpreted by his own private judgment, he considers final—an infallible Book. The prudent Churchman believes in no terrestrial infallibilities whatsoever; he seeks to reach the truth by no short cuts, nor is he vain enough to decorate his prejudices with the attributes of convictions, or style his private opinions divine truths. He sits at the feet of human history, from that teacher he learns the mind of God. He is a disciple of Jesus Christ; he seeks to hear across the centuries the tones of His voice. He

finds a literature and a history as the means of communication between the Master and himself—the literature of the Bible and the history of the Church. The first is interpreted by the last, and in its turn corrects it. The written Word, read by the light of Apostolic tradition and primitive practice, yields a sense which can claim a better voucher than that of any private judgment. The witness of the Church to-day, accordant with that sense, appeals to our acceptance with an authority more binding than any which parade of ecclesiastical assertion can provide. Consider, further, the loss of practical guidance which derives from ignorance of Church History. I will take three examples of urgent present-day problems, which imperatively require for their due solution the light of Church History, that is, of Christian experience—the place of ritual in religious worship, the conduct of missions, and the attitude of the Church towards secular politics. No one will dispute that these are problems of first-rate magnitude, upon which the mind of the Church is greatly exercised. How different would have been the conduct of clergy and laymen in regard to ritual if they had had regard to the teachings of Church History! On the one hand, it would have been seen that ritual is the necessary expression of conviction; that you may as well separate the rose from its scent as separate a man's inward beliefs from appropriate outward action. It would have been seen that the convictions of the Church have ever found appropriate expression in ritual, and that a return to Catholic precedent in the matter of belief would

naturally involve a revival of the Catholic ritual. On the other hand, it would have been seen with equal clearness that ritual has ever tended towards exaggeration; that elaborateness of ritual has often been compatible with deadness of spiritual life; that ritual, if it is not to attain an undue prominence, and to burden instead of assist the conscience, must be perpetually checked by regular, careful, doctrinal teaching and a vigilant, practical morality. We should have heard fewer complaints of ritual extravagance; we should not have passed the Public Worship Regulation Act, a measure which became obsolete almost as soon as it became operative.

The conduct of missions must anxiously interest every true disciple. The Church has had a vast experience in missions. Does it not seem foolish beyond belief that modern Christians should put their hands to the work of converting the heathen without paying the slightest heed to the teachings of that experience? It is unquestionable that there is deep and general discontent with the conduct of modern missions. It is said in some quarters, by no means naturally hostile, that the zeal and self-sacrifice that send nearly half a million pounds abroad every year from this country are largely wasted by reason of the faulty methods adopted by the missionaries. The circumstance that impresses me most deeply when I consider modern missions is their great unlikeness to the missions of the past. Do you think Ethelbert would have been converted and the English Church founded if instead of Augustine and his forty monks there had arrived

a couple of married missionaries, followed speedily by a variety of jealous rivals? The urgent need of the hour seems to be a better conduct of missions. I submit that the necessary preliminary to any improvement must be a careful appreciation of the lessons of history.*

The attitude of the Church towards secular politics is a question which presents itself for answer to every generation in turn, and never more imperatively than to this generation. Are the clergy to be the ministers of a political theory? the advocates of a divine right enshrined in some type of social order? I have but to pick up a well-known newspaper to learn that strong opinions on the subject exist. A considerable school of thought—if I may so call it—regards the alliance between the Church and the democracy as part of the divine plan. The frankest advocacy of the latest democratic projects is urged in the name of discipleship. It is assumed that to be in disagreement with the aspirations of the populace is to be in some sense false to the Christian position. A clergyman is to be a tribune of the people. I appeal to Church History. I ask what has been the teaching of Christian experience, and I obtain no doubtful answer. What did the cause of righteousness gain from the practical consecration by the Church of the Roman Imperial system? Did religion benefit by the enthusiastic advocacy of the divine right of the monarchy in England in the sixteenth and seven-

* This is frankly admitted by the wisest missionaries, *e.g.*, by Bishop French, of Lahore, who habitually consulted Christian precedent in his own missionary undertakings.

teenth centuries? Was it a salutary procedure when the Church of the Southern States of America declared slavery to be a divine institution? Will anyone dispute the answer to these questions? Is it not notorious that in every case the Church suffered deep injury from her blunder in linking the religion of Jesus to this or that political system, or type of social order? Our attention has been directed by a melancholy event to the great empire of Russia.* We are told that there orthodoxy is so closely associated with patriotism that not to profess membership of the Russian Church is to expose yourself to the suspicions, and even the penalties which attach to disaffected citizens. Will any maintain that Russian religion benefits from this frank endorsement by the Church of a particular political order? We recall the hideous persecution of the Jews and Protestants, which has so greatly stained the credit of Russia during recent years, and we cannot be in doubt as to our decision. Remembering, then, all these teachings of the past, we steadily refuse to repeat the obstinate error. The Church accepts all forms of political order and all types of social organization; she may not attach the authority of Christ to any; she is independent of all; she is *the kingdom not of this world*, for which the *servants of Christ may not fight* whether with swords or voting papers; her citizens have their *citizenship in heaven*.

Once more, it is not only practical guidance in such great concerns that is lost when Church History

* The death of the Czar, Alexander III.

is neglected, there is a still more serious forfeiture of moral strength. The history of the Church is full of the records of spiritual conflict. We may find there worthy examples to emulate, noble achievements to admire, sad failures by which to take warning, dark apostasies moving us to anxious fear. The stimulus of comradeship, the self-respect of noble and ancient lineage, the enthusiasm of victory, are all at our disposal in that treasury of all saints. We impoverish our religious life by remaining in ignorance of the great story of the Church. We should take lesson from the holy psalmists, who fed the flame of spiritual ardour within their own hearts by the brave memories of old. We should bring up our children to pride themselves on the history of the Church as they pride themselves on the history of their native land, only with a pride that has in it nothing of vain-glory. *"I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wondrous works that He hath done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and tell them to their children: that they might set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments."*

PLANTING OF THE CHURCH IN BRITAIN

*Fourth Sunday after Easter, May 16th, 1897,
in the Hospital.*

“Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord : look unto the rock whence ye were hewn : and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged.”—ISAIAH li. 1.

THE Church of England celebrates this year a very memorable event. Thirteen centuries have run their course since first an English monarch and an English race accepted the profession of Christianity. All reflective Englishmen must recognize the importance and acknowledge the interest of that event, and allow the reasonableness of our present commemoration. To English Churchmen the events upon which, across so many ages, we look back are not merely the subjects of deep and ardent thanksgiving, but also the springs of religious confidence. In order that the real significance of those events may not escape us, I have considered that it might be profitable to use the Sundays which remain before Whit Sunday in giving a short review of the beginnings of Christianity in these islands. The character

and worth of S. Augustine's work can hardly be appraised with justice apart from some understanding of the preceding ages. We must begin at the beginning and take the history in order. Moreover, let none object to me that such inquiries as these which will now engage us are alien to the Christian pulpit. The record of the Church of Christ is sacred to all who believe that the presiding, directing influence of the Church's life is the Holy Spirit. We read the history of ancient Israel in our religious assemblies, because we believe that history to represent the workings of the divine purpose in an exceptional way. Here, we say, must the will of God be revealed if anywhere. And can we refuse the same religious value to the history of spiritual Israel—Christ's holy Church universal? Nay, can we doubt that the mind of God is there made still more clearly manifest? So I make no apology for leading you a little outside the conventional limits, and inviting you to review the sacred past of British Christianity.

When did the Gospel first reach these shores? By whom were the first missionaries sent? Who were they, and how were they received? These are questions to which history returns no clear and decisive answer—upon which therefore legend has fastened and built a fanciful fabric of graceful, and attractive, and extravagant fiction. Rejecting all such, what are the facts?

Christianity passed into Britain unobserved and unrecorded. This island, or at least the greater part of it, for beyond the Wall of Hadrian the Pictish tribes maintained their stormy independence,

formed part of the Roman Empire, and as such was bound to the Continent by many close bonds. Inter-communication between the different provinces was easy and frequent. Splendid roads ran from one end of the empire to the other. The army was a great civilizing and unifying influence. Commerce, with native pertinacity, drew the most remote districts together. It was a matter of course that any movement in one part of the empire would penetrate every other part. Christianity, we know, had spread widely in the East and in Southern Europe during the lifetime of the apostles. S. Paul is reasonably believed to have preached the Gospel in Spain. Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Aulus Plautius, the conqueror of Britain, appears to have been a Christian. It is certain that in the second century Christian soldiers were numerous in the Roman army, and we learn in the New Testament that converts were found even in Cæsar's household. It is evident that Christianity had easy access to Britain. The Christian trader brought in his bales a more precious gift: the Christian legionary became the pioneer of the gospel of peace. Individuals going about their ordinary business were the first founders of the Christian Church in Britain. Certain it is that no formal mission was sent to the island. Christianity grew up silently and unobtrusively. When the Church had been firmly planted in Northern Gaul, such individual and unofficial mission work would receive a great impetus. It is probable that the conversion of Northern Gaul was effected during the last half of the second century. We

have evidence of great missionary efforts made by the Churches of Southern Gaul about the year 150, and it is most natural to ascribe to these the Christianity which must certainly have been established in the North at no distant period. Here I must stop to refer briefly to the famous story of the conversion of Lucius, King of Britain. It has been introduced by Bede into his history, and has obtained extended acceptance. It is still commonly repeated in popular Roman Catholic books. This is the story as Bede tells it:—

“While the holy man, Eleuther, presided as Bishop over the Roman Church, Lucius, King of Britain, sent to him a letter entreating that by his order he might be made a Christian, and presently obtained the fulfilment of his pious petition, after which the Britons preserved the faith thus received—inviolate and entire—in tranquil peace until the times of the Emperor Diocletian.”

Bede was writing in good faith, but he was deceived by his authority. All students—as well Roman Catholic as others—agree that the story was interpolated into the so-called Catalogue of the Roman Popes two or more centuries after the time of the alleged event. It is first found in a document attributed to the sixth century, and may safely be pronounced fabulous.* Some have thought that it was forged at the end of the seventh century in the interest of the Roman claims. We need not concern ourselves further with it here, but may resume the

* e.g., Mr. HAVERFIELD, in the *English Historical Review*.

course of our discussion. At the beginning of the third century we encounter the first notices of Christianity in Britain. The African father, Tertullian, exults in the wide extension of the Gospel. He boasts that districts in Britain inaccessible to the Roman legionaries had been subdued by Christ. The passage is highly rhetorical, and must not therefore be pressed. Moreover, it stands alone. There are no clear evidences of British Christianity in the third century; nevertheless, we may argue from the organized state of the British Church at the beginning of the following century that it must have had a considerable duration in the island.

The fourth century is a very famous epoch of Church History. Its record contains the last of the Imperial persecutions and the first of the general councils. The greatest names of Christian History are found in that record. In the sacred history of Britain, also, the fourth century is an epoch of exceptional interest and importance. It opens with the touching story of the British protomartyr, S. Alban—a story which was speedily overlaid with legend, but which carries on its surface the impress of truth. In this diocese of S. Alban's we have a special interest in the British protomartyr, and I doubt not we are all familiar with the splendid Abbey Church, now the cathedral of the diocese, which the piety of later ages reared on the scene of the martyr's death. The martyrdom of S. Alban is commonly referred to the year 303. A few years later, in 314, we get our first clear view of an organized Church of Britain.

Constantine, having triumphed over his rivals, was now supreme in the West, and his first object was to restore peace to the distracted empire. The obstinate religious quarrel in Africa, where the Donatist heretics were numerous and fanatical, threatened to baffle him. He had recourse to the familiar ecclesiastical plan, which was henceforth to be so generally adopted by the State as a means of healing religious dissensions—the plan of assembling the bishops of the Church in council. The place of assembly was the great Roman city of Arles, and the summons extended to the whole Western Church. The number of bishops present is not known, but the expressions used about the council suggest a very numerous attendance. We have a list of some of those who were present. It contains the names of thirty-three bishops and some priests and deacons, who attended probably as representatives of bishops. Among these are names of three British bishops, of one British priest, and of one British deacon—Eborius, Bishop of York; Restitutus, Bishop of London; and Adelphius, Bishop, probably, of Lincoln; together with Sacerdos, a presbyter, and Arminius, a deacon. These names are full of interest. They show us that the ancient British Church in the fourth century possessed the Apostolic Ministry in its three orders of bishop, priest, and deacon; that the bishoprics were fixed in the great centres of Roman government and life; that the Church in Britain was in full communion with the rest of the Imperial Church. The Council of Arles passed twenty-two canons, and it is not uninteresting to note that the British Church, on

its first appearance in history, was required to legislate about matters which are urgent in our own time. The eighth canon prohibited re-baptism of those who had been baptized by heretics, and the tenth prohibited the re-marriage of the innocent party in a case of putting away for adultery. It is possible, but not I think probable, that British bishops sat in the great Council of Nicœa in 325. On the doctrinal issues of the fourth century the British Church seems to have been generally orthodox, though in 359 three British bishops accepted a heretical formulary at the Council of Ariminum. This lapse, however, was the result of coercion, and four years later the Island Church assured S. Athanasius of its support. The fifth century witnessed the rise of the Pelagian heresy. The author of that heresy—Pelagius—was himself a native of Britain, and the heresy found many supporters in this country. Distressed by the rapid progress of the new error, the British Church appealed for help to the neighbouring Church—I think we might almost say the Mother Church of Gaul—and on two occasions in response to this appeal the famous Gallic bishop, S. Germanus, visited Britain. Prosper of Aquitaine, a contemporary writer, affirms that Germanus was sent on his earlier visit by Coelestine I., Bishop of Rome, while Constantius of Lyons, who, though writing sixty years afterwards, had access to local traditions, attributes his mission to a “numerous synod” of Gallican bishops. There is, perhaps, no real disagreement between these accounts. The Pope is known to have taken an active part in

resisting Pelagianism, and he may well have used whatever influence he possessed to induce Germanus to visit Britain in the cause of orthodoxy. But the natural authority to which a Gallican bishop of that age would have recourse was a synod of his fellow-bishops, and that was the course adopted on this occasion.

The first visit was in 429, the last in 447, and both were completely successful. The false teachers were expelled the island, and settled on the Continent with a view to their reclamation. The protracted controversies of the time were working their effect on the temper of the Church, and disposing it towards the barbarities which marked the succeeding ages. As yet, however, persecution by Christians was in its infancy.

We learn incidentally that British Christians at this time found their way to the sacred scenes of our Saviour's earthly life in company with the multitudes of pilgrims from many lands, whom piety and penitence led to Palestine. We know, also, that during the fifth century the British Church produced great missionaries, who carried the faith to the pagan barbarians of Ireland and Southern Scotland. But of these we must speak in the next discourse, when we have as our subject the most famous, though the most shadowy of all the heroes of the British Church.

The withdrawal of the Roman legionaries in 410 committed the Church to an independence which was always perilous, and speedily became disastrous. A wedge of aggressive Paganism was thrust between

this island and the mainland of Europe. The British Church was lost to the sight and almost to the knowledge of the Christian West, and when, a century and a half later, it was recovered to view by the mission of S. Augustine, it was found to wear a rude, archaic aspect, offensive to Roman notions of ecclesiastical order. We may make deductions from the statements of writers who, however honest, were unquestionably prejudiced against the British fashions; but we cannot doubt that this long isolation was very injurious both to faith and morals. The vehement denunciations of Gildas in the next century are probably exaggerated, as they are certainly declamatory and verbose; but they may be justly considered to enshrine the truth. Isolation is a perilous experience both for individuals and for churches, and there are few who can be subject to it without injury. The British Church gave way before the English pagans throughout most of Eastern Britain, and the land resumed a pagan aspect. The violence of racial and religious hatred may explain the scantiness of the remains of the early Christianity of the island. At Canterbury and at S. Alban's churches are known to have existed, and the observant visitor may recognize the Roman bricks built into the existing structures, which themselves belong to later ages.* In 1892 at Silchester, in Hampshire, the foundations of a Roman-British Church were unearthed. It must have been a very small building—only thirty feet long and ten feet wide, with a western

* I am here following Mr. Haverfield's account in the *Engl. Hist. Review*.

apse, which still retains "a panel five feet square, of finer mosaic work, marking probably the position of the altar"; in fact, this little church was designed on the regular basilican model common in the fourth century throughout the empire. The zeal and industry of our antiquaries have gathered many relics of the earliest Church of Britain, and if it cannot be said that sufficient evidence has yet accumulated to justify the belief that Christianity had taken so strong a hold on the country as was the case in Gaul, yet certainly it was far more widely extended and firmly planted than has been generally supposed. One prominent exception should be noted: "We have no clear sign of Christianity in the army. In the great legionary fortresses of Isca and Deva, in the huge military frontier which extended from the Humber to Hadrian's Wall, the presence of the new religion is almost imperceptible." At the earlier period Christians were probably more often found in the ranks of the army, but when persecution became the settled policy of the empire, soldiers were more exposed to official pressure than others. It is not unusual to find altars inscribed "Deo Veteri" or "Dibus Veteribus": "to the Old Gods"; they mark at once the tenacity and the despair of Paganism. British Christianity passed out of view under the black clouds of adversity. The sixth century was one of the "dark days" of the world's life in Western Europe, and especially in Britain. The 79th Psalm, which we have sung this morning, expresses with inimitable force and pathos the despair of the Church at such a time.

With what intensity of feeling would the sad words be uttered by broken-hearted men, standing amid desolated sanctuaries and homesteads vacant and burned: "*O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance; Thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps. The dead bodies of Thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of Thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. . . . How long, O Lord, wilt Thou be angry for ever? Shall Thy jealousy burn like fire?*" There was no security anywhere—no peace, no law. Pirates filled the seas; freebooters filled the land.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came
 Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war
 Each upon other, wasted all the land;
 And still from time to time the heathen host
 Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was left.
 And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
 Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
 But man was less and less—.

It was pardonable to despair of the future in such a time, and as we read the sad pages of Gildas we recognize the note of utter hopelessness. Yet we know, looking back from our distant age, that in that time of anguish the Most High was preparing for His Church her most illustrious and faithful triumphs. That very English race, whose relentless cruelty filled Christendom with horror, and whose obdurate paganism obliterated the faith of Christ wherever it came, was marked out in the counsels of God for distinguished Christian service. Here, perhaps, is the lesson of the history we have

been reviewing to-day. We too are tempted to lose heart about the Church sometimes. How shall the faith resist the disintegrating influences of modern thought? How shall the Church maintain her ground in face of the destructive social and political forces of the time? How slowly she advances at home! How little effect her missionaries seem to have on the vast mass of heathenism abroad! Nay, is there any progress? is there any effect? History returns answers of comfort. There have been darker times, worse circumstances, a more hopeless outlook. Man's despair has been God's opportunity. The prophet's vision has continually pictured the fortunes of the Church of Christ. The valley is full of bones—dead, dry, desperate—and the question has seemed the cruellest mockery, "*Can these bones live?*" The wise men of the world write epitaphs over a religion which seems to them perished irrecoverably, in scorn, in regret, in admiration, in hatred, as their temperament, or standpoint, or knowledge may suggest.

And still to the "*watchers of eternity*" the old miracle is seen to be renewed. A divine voice, inaudible to the gross ears of the worldling and the sceptic, but close and clear to the quick ear of faith, cries the command: "*Prophesy over these bones, prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.*" And still "*the voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.*" At its summons the charnel house

breaks forth into eager, jubilant life, infinite in strength and beauty and promise of victory. *The bones come together, bone to his bone, and lo, there are sinews upon them, and flesh has come up, and skin has covered them above.* Yea, and the breath of the Eternal has passed upon them and *they live, standing upon their feet, an exceeding great army.*

S. PATRICK, APOSTLE OF IRELAND

*Fourth Sunday after Easter, May 16th, 1897,
in the Hospital.*

“But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me even from my mother’s womb, and called me through His grace to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”

—GALATIANS i. 15, 16.

PERHAPS the surest evidence of spiritual life which any Church can offer is activity in missionary work. The earliest Church of Britain, in the latest period of its independent existence, appears to have failed to provide that evidence, and, as all the world knows, the conversion of the English was achieved by the efforts of foreign Churches; but before the great disasters of the sixth century had paralyzed the energy and almost destroyed the charity of the British Christians, at least two famous “apostles” had gone forth from Britain to preach the Gospel among the neighbouring Pagans. The first of these was Ninian, of whom we know little more than we learn from the brief account which we find in Bede’s *History*. After narrating S. Columba’s mission to the

northern Picts in the latter part of the sixth century, the venerable writer proceeds:—

“For the southern Picts, who dwell on this side of the said mountains (*i.e.*, the Grampians), had received the true faith a long while before, as they affirm, abandoning idolatrous error under the preaching of Bishop Ninian, a most reverent and saintly man of British race, who had been regularly taught at Rome both the faith and mysteries of the truth. The English nation now possesses his Episcopal See, distinguished by the name and Church of S. Martin the Bishop, where also he himself sleeps in the body together with many saints. This place, belonging to the province of the Bernicii, is commonly called ‘The White House,’ because he built there a church of stone, after a fashion unknown to the Britons.” *

S. Martin, you will remember, was the famous Bishop of Tours, to whom, more than to any other man, may be ascribed the rapid development of monasticism in the West. He died in the year 397, and the news of his death appears to have reached S. Ninian while he was preaching to the Picts in Galloway. The dedication to a Gallican bishop of the first stone church in Britain is a striking indication of that close intercourse between the British and Gallican Churches, to which I have already directed your attention. Further, you will not fail to mark the implied connection between Christianity and civilization. S. Ninian introduces among the Picts not only a purer faith, but also the practice of building with stone. Till a much later period the

* BEDE, *Eccles. Hist.*, iii, c. 4.

use of wood and wattle for houses and churches continued to prevail in Britain, and this fact goes far to explain the absence of memorials of British Christianity.

The second of the two great British "apostles" was S. Patrick, with whom we are here more specifically concerned. About no other name has legend gathered in such bewildering luxuriance, none has provoked a more ruthless scepticism. Probably most of you are aware that the very existence of this saint is denied by many scholars, among whom I observe, with some surprise, the learned editor of the last and best edition of Bede's *History*.^{*} But I am not convinced by the destructive argument. On general grounds I think it highly improbable that so early and so considerable a legend should have been destitute of any historical foundation. More particular considerations are these: the undoubted mention of Patrick by Abbat Cummian in 634, that is within 150 years of the traditional date of the saint's death; the two documents ascribed to S. Patrick and held by most scholars to be genuine; the evidence of topography, which the Irish scholars of this century have accumulated with admirable industry; the inconceivableness of such subtle, aimless, and extensive forgery as must be supposed on the sceptical hypothesis. Therefore, without wearying you further, I may at once affirm the position taken up in this sermon. I shall follow the great Irish scholars in assuming the genuineness of the two

^{*} Plummer's Edition of BEDE'S *Eccles. Hist.*, vol. ii. pp. 25, 26.

documents, known as the Confession of S. Patrick and the Epistle to Coroticus, and generally I shall accept their presentment of S. Patrick's history.

S. Patrick was not the first missionary to visit Ireland. Pope Cœlestine is said by Prosper of Aquitaine, who was his secretary, and ought to know the truth about the matter, to have sent Palladius to be the first Bishop of the Scots,* or Irish, who believed in Christ. Probably Christianity in Ireland, as in Britain, began in the normal intercourse of trade or politics. The earliest missionaries were quite obscure persons, whose names have long since passed out of memory. The notion that every missionary must have a formal mission from some Church before he may enter on the work of spreading the Gospel belongs to later times. In the earlier ages of the Church, before controversy had forced into prominence the claims of Sees and the notion of jurisdiction, Christian men needed no better commission to preach the Gospel to the heathen than their Baptismal Vows, no more powerful inducement than the constraining love of Christ. Palladius appears to have failed in his mission. The "wild and savage" tribesmen would have none of him, and he himself had little heart for his task. He returned from the inhospitable island, and died in Britain on his return journey to Rome. This was in the year 431. A few years later, probably in the

* It must always be remembered that at this time, and for some centuries later, the Scots are the natives of Ireland. Scotland ultimately derives its name from the Irish colony, which established itself in Argyllshire early in the sixth century.

year 440, a greater missionary landed in Ireland to take up the work which Palladius had abandoned, and to carry it through to a successful issue.

The Confession of S. Patrick,* written in barbarous Latin, opens with these words :—

“I, Patrick the sinner, am the rudest, and least, and most contemptible of all the faithful. I had as my father Calpurnius, the deacon, the son of the priest Potitus, who lived in the township of Bannaven Taberniae, for he possessed near the place a small farm, where I was led captive. I was then nearly sixteen years old. I knew not the true God, and I was led in captivity to Hyberio [*i.e.*, Ireland], together with many thousands of people, according to our deserts, for we departed from God and kept not His commandments, and were not obedient to our priests, who counselled our salvation.”

In the Epistle to Coroticus he says that he was “*ingenuus*,” noble, according to the flesh, for his father was a Decurion, or magistrate. His birthplace has been generally identified with Kilpatrick, near Dumbarton, in Scotland. The date of his birth was the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century. Slave-raids by the Picts and Scots were then events of common occurrence, and in one of these Patrick, a lad of sixteen, was carried captive to Ireland. His master was Milchu, king of Dalarradia, and how Patrick passed his time of servitude we may learn from his own words, which I translate :—

“After I came to Hiberio I used to feed the swine

* The two genuine Patrician documents are printed in HADDAN and STUBBS' *Councils and Eccles. Documents*, vol. ii. part ii. pp. 296-319.

daily, and I often prayed by day, and the love of God increased more and more in me, and the fear of Him, and faith, and the Spirit waxed stronger, so that in a single day I used to pray as many as 100 prayers, and likewise in the night as many. I used to tarry also in the woods and on the mountain. Before daybreak I would wake for prayer in snow, and ice, and rain, and I felt no harm, and, as I now see, there was no reluctance in me, because the Spirit was glowing in me.”

Such was the young man's preparation for his life-work. Solitude, exile, toil, hardship — stern teachers, truly; but not rarely the heralds of the noblest victories. After seven years Patrick escaped and made his way to Gaul. He is said to have studied under Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, and though the evidence is not very strong, there is no improbability in the statement. In Gaul he stayed many years, and was ordained priest and bishop. Then about the year 440 he returned to Ireland to begin those protracted labours which have earned for him a place among the “apostles” of Christian history. It would be impossible to undertake here any complete and chronological account of his missions. It is difficult to recognize the narrow line of truth amid the ample embellishments of fiction. He himself relates the origin of his expedition into Connaught, and I shall make no apology for translating the passage, which seems to me very characteristic of our saint:—

“Again, a few years later I was in Britain with my relatives, who received me as a son; and they begged

me earnestly now, after the many tribulations which I endured, never more to leave them. And there I saw in the vision of the night a man coming as if from Hiberio, whose name was Victoricus, [and he carried] a multitude of letters; one of them he gave to me, and I read the beginning of a letter containing 'The Cry of the Hiberians.' And while I repeated the opening words of the letter, I thought that at the very moment I heard the cry of the men themselves, who were near the wood of Foclut, hard by the western sea, and thus they cried: 'We pray thee, holy youth, come to us, and walk among us.' I was sorely stricken in heart, and I could read no more, so I awoke. Thanks be to God that after many years the Lord has granted to them according to their cry." Students of the New Testament will be reminded of a similar vision in the life of S. Paul, which also determined the direction of his missionary effort. "*A vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them.*"* S. Patrick, like S. Paul, accepted the vision as a Divine direction. There is a story related in one of the older histories of the saint, which belongs to this Connaught mission, and is in my judgment worthy

* Of course it may be argued, and perhaps justly, that the vision of S. Paul was the source and model of that of S. Patrick. There are fashions in spiritual experience, and apostolic vocations present a remarkable family likeness.

of close attention. It illustrates both the idolatry of the pagan Irish, and the faith of S. Patrick. The story itself is clearly legendary, but we may assume a foundation of fact. The daughters of the king of Connaught suddenly encounter S. Patrick and his companions, and they begin to question them. "The virgins said unto them, 'Whence are ye, and whence come ye?' And Patrick said unto them, 'It were better for you to confess to the true God than to inquire concerning our race.' The first virgin said, 'Who is God, and where is God? And of what nature is God, and where is His dwelling-place? Has your God sons and daughters, gold and silver? Is He ever-living? Is He beautiful? Did Mary foster His Son? Are His daughters dear and bounteous to men of the world? Is He in heaven or on earth, in the sea, in rivers, in mountainous places, in valleys? Declare unto us the knowledge of Him? How shall He be seen? How is He to be loved? How is He to be found? Is it in youth? Is it in old age that He is to be found?'" In reply S. Patrick preaches the Gospel, and proposes baptism to the princesses. "'I desire,' he said, 'to unite you to the heavenly King, inasmuch as you are the daughters of an earthly king. Believe in Him!' And the virgins said as with one mouth and one heart, 'Teach us most diligently how we may believe in the heavenly King. Show us how we may see Him face to face, and whatsoever thou shalt say unto us we will do.' And Patrick said, 'Believe ye that by baptism ye put off the sin of your father and your mother?' They answered, 'We believe.' 'Be-

lieve ye in repentance after sin?' 'We believe.' 'Believe ye in life after death?' 'Believe ye the resurrection at the day of judgment?' 'We believe.' 'Believe ye the unity of the Church?' 'We believe.' And they were baptized and a white garment put upon their heads. And they asked to see the face of Christ. And the saint said unto them, 'Ye cannot see the face of Christ except ye taste of death, and except ye receive the sacrifice.' And they answered, 'Give us the sacrifice that we may behold the Son, our spouse.' And they received the Eucharist of God, and they slept in death." The legend appears to summarize actual experiences. Such questionings were continually being addressed to the missionaries in the course of their work; and in such wise were they answered.

S. Patrick is said to have preached the Gospel at Tara, the stronghold of Paganism, and many wonderful stories are related of his contests with the Druids. One of these seems to enshrine a fact. The saint had approached Tara on the eve of a great Pagan festival, when it was prohibited, on pain of death, to kindle any fire. Ignorant of the prohibition, or determined to resist it, S. Patrick, since it was Easter Eve, followed the old Christian practice of lighting candles. The Irish king in rage and astonishment sent for his Druids, and they returned him for answer a melancholy prophecy that Patrick's fire would conquer all the fires of Paganism. In the year 445 S. Patrick founded the Church of Armagh, which subsequently became the seat of the Irish Primacy. Some years later, perhaps as late as 493, he died at Saul, near Downpatrick.

It is difficult to appraise justly the work of this great missionary. Ireland was still Pagan: the indefatigable labours of one lifetime cannot convert nations; but this at least must be admitted, S. Patrick planted Christianity so firmly in the island that henceforward Paganism waned. He made the Gospel intelligible to the Irish, and drew to its service the best conscience and the best ability of the race. In this sense he must be held to have earned his great title, "Apostle of Ireland."

There has come down to us an ancient hymn, called "S. Patrick's Breastplate." More than 1000 years ago it was believed to be the composition of the saint himself. This, perhaps, is improbable, but certainly the hymn reflects the spirit of S. Patrick, as it is expressed in the two writings which are allowed to be his. It glows throughout with an ardent personal devotion to our blessed Lord. I will venture to read you a few stanzas of Mrs. Alexander's charming version, which is included in the Hymnal of the Irish Church:—

"I bind unto myself to-day

The pow'r of God to hold and lead,

His eye to watch, His might to stay,

His ear to hearken to my need.

The wisdom of my God to teach,

His hand to guide, His shield to ward;

The Word of God to give me speech, -

His heavenly host to be my guard.

"Against all Satan's spells and wiles,

Against false words of heresy,

Against the knowledge that defiles,

Against the heart's idolatry,

Against the wizard's evil craft,
 Against the death-wound and the burning,
 The choking wave, the poisoned shaft,
 Protect me, Christ, till Thy returning.

"Christ be with me, Christ within me,
 Christ behind me, Christ before me,
 Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
 Christ to comfort and restore me,
 Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
 Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
 Christ in hearts of all that love me,
 Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

"I bind unto myself the name,
 The strong name of the Trinity;
 By invocation of the same,
 The Three in One, and One in Three;
 Of whom all Nature hath creation,
 Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
 Praise to the Lord of my salvation,
 Salvation is of Christ the Lord."*

The hymn is prefaced in the ancient manuscript with a kind of rubric, which explains the circum-

* Dr. Todd (*S. Patrick*, p. 432) thus sums up his judgment on this hymn: "We may not, therefore, err very much in taking this hymn as a fair representation of S. Patrick's faith and teaching. Whether it was actually written by him or not, it was certainly composed at a period not very distant from his times, with a view to represent and put forth his sentiments. It exhibits in a much more probable and favourable light the character of the missionary from whom Ireland received the faith, than that in which he is made to appear in the legendary lives. In them he stands before us as a great magician, bringing down judgments from heaven, causing sudden destruction to fall upon his enemies, terrifying, not persuading—a magus more powerful than the magi of the Pagan king. But in the hymn, notwithstanding some tincture of superstition, we find the pure and undoubted truths of Christianity, a firm faith in the protecting providence and power of God, and Christ made all in all."

stances of its composition and the benefits of its use. Superstition, doubtless, soon reduced it to the level of an incantation or a charm; nevertheless, there is truth in the assurance to everyone whose tongue in repeating "S. Patrick's Breastplate" truly expresses his heart's belief: "This is a religious armour to protect body and soul against demons and men and vices. Every person who sings it every day with all his attention on God shall not have demons appearing to his face. It will be a protection to him against every poison and envy. It will be a safeguard to him against sudden death. It will be an armour to his soul after death."

S. Paul, speaking of the progress of the Gospel in his own day, utters a bold paradox: "*The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*" The words might sum up the lesson of S. Patrick's life. Nothing marked him out for his memorable work: he was forced by calamity into the great undertaking—untutored and, as far as we know, uncommissioned, he was taught by the Holy Ghost and directed by events. Human policy and organization contributed nothing to one of the most fruitful apostleships of history. That is a fact eminently deserving to be remembered in this age when on all hands men are magnifying organization,* and where the idea of individual effort

* It should be remembered that under modern civilized conditions "organization" can be "developed" with astonishing facility and completeness. It has a certain advertising value in the ecclesiastical market, where "business methods" are now domesticated, and competition is not less severe and unscrupulous than in the markets of normal commerce,

has a suspected character. The first requisite of the missionary is a divine vocation. That secured, all else may follow ; that absent, no amount of organization can effect anything permanent. And vocation cannot be regulated by any human authority, nor can it be restrained within conventional limits. S. Paul's confession is representative of all the "Lord's messengers." It explains S. Patrick's career: it is the key to every missionary career, and the test. "*When it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through His grace to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.*" And that vocation comes where and when men least expect it. And still in His choice of men "*God is no respecter of persons.*"

CELTIC CHRISTIANITY

Rogation Sunday, May 23rd, 1897, in the Hospital.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God."—ISAIAH xxxv. 1, 2.

THERE is extant an ancient document,* written probably about the middle of the eighth century, which distinguishes three stages or epochs in the early history of the Irish Church. The Irish saints are divided into "three distinct classes or orders, which may be severally described as secular, monastic, and eremitical." It will, perhaps, usefully introduce our discussion on Celtic Christianity if I read to you the principal statements of this remarkable summary.

"The first Order of Catholic Saints was in the time of Patrick. And then all were bishops, glorious and holy and full of the Holy Spirit, 350 in number, founders of Churches. They had one Head, Christ, and one leader, Patrick; they used one Mass, one Celebration, one tonsure from ear to ear. They observed one Easter, on the fourteenth moon after

* Printed in HADDAN and STUBBS' *Councils*, vol. ii. part ii. p. 292.

the equinox, and what had been excommunicated by one Church all excommunicated. They did not reject the ministry and companionship of women; because, founded on the rock of Christ, they feared not the blast of temptation. . . . All these bishops were sprung from the Romans,* and Franks, and Britons, and Scots.

"The second Order is of Catholic Presbyters. For in this Order there were few bishops and many presbyters, in number 300. They had one Head, our Lord; they celebrated different masses, and [observed] diverse rules; [they kept] one Easter, on the fourteenth moon after the equinox, and [used] one tonsure from ear to ear. They rejected the ministry of women, and separated them in monasteries. . . . They received a mass from David the bishop, and Gildas and Docus, the Britons.

"The third Order of Saints was as follows. There were holy presbyters and a few bishops, in number 100; they dwelt in desert places, and lived on herbs, and water, and the alms of the faithful; they abandoned their own possessions, and had different rules and masses, and a diverse tonsure (for some used the coronal and some the total tonsure), and a diverse solemnity of Easter (for some celebrated the Resurrection on the fourteenth moon, some on the sixteenth)."

These successive orders marked a declension in holiness. They might be compared severally to sun, moon, and stars.

* *i.e.*, inhabitants of the old Roman province of Gaul. In early times "Roman" carried to Christian minds a civil rather than an ecclesiastical reference.

This remarkable summary is not, of course, to be taken for literal history ; but it does roughly indicate the actual development of Celtic Christianity. First came the great missionaries, then the great monasteries, then the great ascetics. And these successive stages of Church life in Ireland represent also the leading characteristics of Irish Christianity. Nowhere else has the individual such ample liberty ; nowhere does he count for so much. On the soil of Ireland individuality was unweighted by traditions of Imperial order, or by the strong organization of the Imperial Church. The anarchy of barbarism permitted that marvellous outburst of individual enthusiasm and devotion which converted half Europe, and covered the Irish name with imperishable glory. From the sixth century to the eleventh the Irish missionaries pushed their way, with dauntless courage and insatiable ardour, into the Pagan lands of central Europe, into Great Britain, and into the remotest islands of the northern seas. The memorials of their presence are scattered over an immense area from Iceland in the farthest north to Italy in the south. "Forgotten or unknown in their own country," writes the eloquent Montalembert, "their names must be sought for in the primitive annals of every European nation, and their relics discovered under the altars where the gratitude of peoples, converted by their patience, their courage, their unwearying activity, had bestowed them." These heroic missionaries went forth on their adventurous expeditions with scanty provision and equipment. The fragile boats made of rods, covered with skins,

such as may still be seen in use among the peasantry of the remoter districts of Connaught, seem perilous craft for such distant voyages in such stormy seas; but the spirit of adventure consecrated to the service of Christ, and vastly stimulated by the missionary motive, despised all perils and ran all risks. In the sixth and seventh centuries Ireland was a swarming hive of monks, and when all exaggerations dictated by patriotism and religion have been allowed for, the monasteries must in those disastrous times have appeared veritable oases of civilization and devotion. This Celtic monasticism was quite unlike the monasticism of the rest of Western Christendom; it reflected the social condition and the natural genius of the Celtic race. Its origin was Eastern;* the external aspect of the primitive Irish monastery was the same as that of the monasteries of Egypt and Syria. But the clannish spirit of the Irish people entered into their religious life, and shaped their religious institutions. The Irish monastery was a sacred clan: the abbot or co-arb corresponded to the tribal chief. It is probable that in many cases the parallelism went further. The abbot nominated his successor, and where the original abbot had been a member of the chief's family it is easy to see how the notions of clannish loyalty and monastic obedience would be intermingled in the monastic mind. The numbers of monks living together at the great monasteries were very large. Tradition speaks of thousands at a single centre. We should

* See a most interesting account of the Eastern connections of Irish Christianity in Prof. G. T. STOKES' *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, pp. 166-188.

distrust round numbers, and rest content with the fact that monasticism in Ireland covered the whole field of ecclesiastical organization. The diocesan episcopate, which existed everywhere else in Christendom, scarcely existed in Ireland. There were bishops, of course, and the spiritual pre-eminence ascribed to them was the same as that ascribed to bishops elsewhere; but the government of the early Irish Church was not vested in the bishops, but in the abbots of the great monasteries. It appears to have been a common arrangement to have a bishop resident in the monasteries. This was certainly the case at Iona, the most famous of all the Irish monasteries, about which we shall have something to say later. The bishop, to borrow Dr. Reeves' language, was regarded as essential to the propagation of "the Church rather than its maintenance," though "the essential function of the episcopal office was scrupulously maintained."*

Dr. Fowler, the learned editor of the last edition of Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba*, has briefly summarized the Christianity of the early Irish

* NOTE.—At one time it was customary to represent the constitution of the Columban Church as *Presbyterian*, but nobody any longer champions that opinion. The abbots of Iona, following their great founder's example, were presbyters; but, as Dr. Reeves points out, this "by no means implied a usurpation or disregard of the episcopal offices, for there were at all times bishops connected with the society, resident at Hy, or some dependent Church, who were subject to the abbot's jurisdiction, that is, who rendered him conventual obedience, agreeably to their monastic vow; whose acts were performed on the responsibility of the abbot, or in the name of the community; and who were assigned their stations, or called in to ordain—very much as the bishops of the *Unitas Fratrum* in the present day—being regarded as essential to the propagation of the Church rather than its maintenance; and who therefore had as little

Church: "It was certainly neither 'Roman' nor 'Protestant' in the ordinary sense of those terms; the modern system that comes nearest to it is that of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, as understood by the school which has arisen out of the Tractarian movement. We find evidence of confession—public, however, rather than private; optional, rather than compulsory; and absolution was usually deferred till the penance had been performed; of Invocation of Saints, and confidence in their protection; of belief in the Real Presence; of the practices of fasting and penance; of prayers for the departed; and of the Sign of the Cross. But we find no indication of the 'worship' now offered to the Blessed Virgin and the saints, nor of unction of the sick in any form, nor the least allusion to any supremacy in the See of Rome, or, indeed, to any connection therewith." (*Adamnani Vita*, p. lxxvi.)

It is, perhaps, worth while to emphasize the fact that Celtic Christianity was independent of the Roman Papacy. This fact cannot be honestly†

authority in the external economy of the society as the bishop had in the Irish monastery of Bobio, or the diocesan in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin. Still, the essential functions of the episcopal office was scrupulously maintained. When a presbyter was to be ordained the bishop was called in; when a distant province was to be brought within the Christian pale a bishop was consecrated for the creation of a local ministry, and successors to him ordained and sent forth, from time to time; and when an accredited candidate came, even from Ireland to Hy, he in like manner was invested with the highest ecclesiastical orders." (v. REEVE'S *Adamnani Vita*, pp. 339-341.)

† "Honesty" in historical investigations = loyalty to the evidence. It is common enough to meet students who allow their doctrinal, political, or denominational prepossessions to outweigh the facts. Such may be, and often are, "saints" and "patriots," but they are not honest historians.

disputed by any well-informed student, yet its significance has been in some quarters very reluctantly admitted. The legends of the Middle Ages almost invariably connect the great Celtic missionaries with Rome, but the earlier and more trustworthy writers give no countenance to the connection. The genuine writings of S. Patrick contain no reference to Rome—the life of S. Columba by Abbat Adamnan is equally silent—the document to which I referred at the beginning of my sermon summarizes the history without any mention of the Papacy. The independence of the Irish Church is sufficiently proved by its long retention of distinctive practices. Thus the Irish persisted in their custom of calculating Easter by the old Jewish eighty-four years cycle, in the teeth of the strongest pressure, until the year 716; and their distinctive mode of tonsure was in like manner retained until the year 718. This independence of Rome was the gift and the witness of the Eastern origin of Celtic Christianity. It proves that the supremacy of the Roman Church, even in the West, has been a later development of Christianity. The notion of a universal episcopate vested in the Bishop of Rome formed no part of the faith, as the Irish Church received it. The independence of their Church was vigorously asserted by the Irish missionaries to the Continent. Of these the most famous was S. Columbanus, whose obstinate adherence to the customs of his Church brought him into collision with the reigning pontiffs, Gregory the Great and Boniface IV. It is,

perhaps, worth while to bear these facts in mind when we find ourselves face to face with the claims of the modern Papacy. Whatever else may be doubtful, this at least cannot be disputed by any honest and well-informed student. Some of the noblest mission-careers, of which the Church of Christ retains the memory, were accomplished outside the sphere of the Roman obedience, and apparently in utter unconsciousness of that Roman supremacy which, in our own day, has become the chief article of Christian belief in the Roman communion.* The independence of the Irish Church was by no means an unmixed advantage. The loose organization which matched the Irish genius was not well adapted to serve the permanent interests of the Church. That abuses of the gravest character speedily made their appearance, and grew to monstrous proportions, is certain. The annals of Ireland record conflicts between rival monasteries, which could not be distinguished from ordinary tribal warfare, so cruel were they, so obstinate, so sanguinary. The discipline of the numerous monastic communities was secured by no fixed and venerated rule, like that of S. Benedict, which exercised so beneficent an influence on later monasticism. While enthusiasm glows in the heart there is little need for any external security for the performance of duty,

* I must permit myself the pleasure of referring the reader to FATHER PULLER'S *Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, where, with characteristic candour, learning, and charity the author shows that the modern Papal claims were unknown or repudiated by the noblest saints of the undivided Church.

but when enthusiasm has grown cold the case is otherwise ; and apart from such security duty will stand little chance of being performed at all. The rapid degeneration of Irish monasticism, following upon its brilliant beginning, must be largely ascribed to the absence of a monastic rule. Moreover, it would seem that in so savage a society as that of ancient Ireland the force of Christianity is inadequate to the task of regenerating mankind, unless it be directed by a powerful organization. The Christian student of history will recognize in the development of the Mediæval Papacy a divine purpose. Those rude ages demanded the strong hand of a centralized hierarchy if, in any measure, mankind was to be brought under the government of Christian morality. The Papacy was a valuable instrument of human discipline in times of violence, and Ireland lost much by lying for so long outside the influence of Rome. This we freely admit, while we point to the conclusive disproof of the monstrous modern Papal claims which the history of Celtic Christianity provides.

The third Order of Irish Saints, as set down in the ancient catalogue which I read to you, was composed of ascetics. They were hermits and solitaries. The common life of the monastery could not satisfy the spiritual ardour of the more devoted members. "Those who desired to follow a more ascetic life than that which the society afforded to its ordinary members withdrew to a solitary place in the neighbourhood of the monastery, where they enjoyed undisturbed meditation without breaking the fraternal

bond." The personal austerities of these devout solitaries almost exceed belief. They need not occupy us here, save as further evidences of the close resemblance between the monasticism of Ireland and that of Syria and Egypt, where the self-inflicted sufferings of the pillar-saints attracted the fearful admiration of multitudes. It is very difficult for the modern mind to appreciate this extreme and, as it seems, fantastic asceticism, and I think we do not err in regarding it generally as an unhealthy development of the Christian spirit. But surely beneath the extravagance, in spite of the admixture of doctrinal error, there was the movement of the genuine Christian spirit, wrestling desperately with the gross, obvious forces of evil which bore down upon it on every hand. The witness of the anchorite, starving himself in solitude in some narrow cell, perhaps attached to a monastery, perhaps wholly separated from human neighbourhood on some remote island or wind-swept cliff, was a true and a necessary witness. The paramount character of barbarian society is its utter degraded animalism. Man has sunk to the closest conformity to the beast to which he can sink. The savage is the child of his impulses, the bond-slave of his fleshly appetites. The most necessary and the most difficult of tasks is to carry into his darkened mind any perception of the higher life—spiritual, supernatural—reaching beyond the grave, which demands the subjection of the bodily appetites, the self-submission of the man to irksome discipline. Who shall criticize severely the methods by which the Christian conscience attempted to fulfil

this supreme and all-but-hopeless task? The hermit rivetted the notice of his contemporaries. He was a protest and a portent. It was impossible to miss the lesson of that voluntary sacrifice of all that makes life tolerable. An advance out of mere animalism had been made when the rude savage bent his head in homage before the emaciated Victim of the Faith in Eternity. Perhaps by no less violent means could the first steps be taken on that long road which leads men out of barbarian darkness into the full, blessed Light and Liberty of Christ's service.

Celtic Christianity perished as an independent type of discipleship.* It crumbled from within through the working of anarchic forces, too strong for so weakly organized a religion to restrain. It gave down before the steady advance of the rival and—as we must allow, having regard to the circumstances of the time—better organized system of Roman Christianity. Its memorials yet remain in literature, in the ruins of primitive monasteries, in the round towers about which so much mystery has gathered, in the gloriously-illuminated MSS. which have aroused the enthusiastic admiration of antiquarians alike in the twelfth century and in the nineteenth; above all, in a mass of saintly traditions, enriching with the fragrant memory of holy men and holy deeds many Churches in many lands. It was a digression in Christian history, scarcely part of the main stream. But nowhere else was the transforming

* Dr. BRIGHT has summed up the case for and against the primitive Irish Church in a recent volume, *Roman See in Early Church*, pp. 387-402.

power of the Gospel so impressively displayed. A single century changes the "barbarous island" into the "Isle of Saints." The traditional title is no extravagant description of the centre from which so many heroes of the Cross issued forth on their missionary expeditions. In all Christian history there is no maturity so swiftly gained, so splendidly abundant. The words of ancient prophecy with which I prefaced my sermon do not seem excessive to describe the early and brilliant summer of Celtic Christianity: "*The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God.*"

Civilization was in those rude times the expression of Christianity, as it is still in Uganda; historically it may not be disputed that the Church of Christ has been the most powerful civilizing agent known to mankind. S. Paul's word to S. Timothy is obviously true of Christianity as a world-force. "*Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.*" But is the union between Christianity and civilization natural and necessary, so that neither Christianity can be permanently divorced from civilization nor civilization from Christianity? To that momentous question I answer, Yes. Christianity always civilizes; it is inevitable that the powerful stimulus which the Gospel gives to the noblest side of human nature should work out over the whole area of social intercourse. Political

liberty, so far as it exists in the world to-day ; social righteousness, so far as it is an actual object of human pursuit ; respect for man as such, so far as it is an active principle moulding the habits of men—these are unknown outside the sphere of Christianity. Civilization, no doubt, is older than the Christian religion,* and must, therefore, be regarded as an independent thing ; but the highest civilization has been Christian, and henceforward civilization, as it recedes from Christianity, degenerates. The springs of the best influences on social life—mercy, justice, purity, self-respect—are in the Gospel, and when the Gospel has been repudiated those springs are cut.

* See Dean Church's Sermon, "Civilization and Religion," *Gifts of Civilization*, pp. 96-120.

S. COLUMBA, APOSTLE OF SCOTLAND

Rogation Sunday, May 23rd, 1897, in the Hospital.

“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I, send me. And He said, Go.”—ISAIAH VI. 8, 9.

LAST Sunday we were perplexed by the extreme difficulty of distinguishing the lines of historic truth amid the mazes of a luxuriant legend, which has rendered the name of S. Patrick at once the most popular and the most suspected name of Celtic Christianity. To-night we have no such difficulty before us. The materials for compiling the history of S. Columba are exceptionally ample and satisfactory. Within a century of his death the saint's life was written by the most distinguished of his successors in the abbacy of Iona. This composition holds a high place in the literature of the Middle Ages. It was written at a time when the memory of S. Columba was fresh. Its author was born within twenty-seven years of the saint's death. He wrote amid the scenes of the history which he related. His literary abilities were considerable, and his reputation

in his own day very high. "The numerous copies of his writings, which are found scattered over the Continent, show in what esteem he was held abroad." (Reeves, viii.) Abbot Adamnan's *Biography* is the chief, but by no means the only authority for the history, which we shall now relate. The Venerable Bede records at some length his mission to the Picts, and describes the constitution of his community at Iona. The *Oldest Irish Life*, attributed to the tenth century, contributes much information about his life in Ireland. O'Donnell's *Life*, written in 1532, is a repertory of the later legends. Finally, the evidence of topography has been collected with admirable skill and thoroughness by the scholars of Ireland. Prefacing so much on the sources of the history, we proceed without further preliminary to sketch the life of this great missionary.

Columba was born at Gartán, in Donegal, on December 7th, in the year 521, according to the most probable reckoning. He came of royal descent by both parents, and this circumstance undoubtedly enhanced his personal influence when he was brought to play a leading part in the politics of Ireland and North Britain. He was educated, in the first instance, at the great monastic school of Moville, then flourishing under the government of S. Finnian, one of the most famous of the Irish saints. Here he was ordained deacon. From Moville he passed under the influence of an aged bard named Gemman, with whom he stayed some time, "probably with a view to perfect himself in the language and literature of his native land." During his sojourn with

Gemman an incident occurred which throws a strong light on the savagery of the time. On one occasion while the bard was reading in the field, and Columba with him, a poor girl, pursued by a ruffian, rushed up to them for protection. They did their best to defend her, but the wretch, disregarding alike their sanctity and their protests, transfixed her with his lance as she cowered under the garment they had thrown over her. The old man turned in horror to the young man at his side. "How long, O Columba, will God, the righteous judge, suffer this crime to go unpunished?" In answer Columba cried after the departing murderer, "In the same hour at which the soul of this slaughtered girl ascends to heaven may the soul of her murderer go down to hell." Scarcely had the words left his lips before the terrified wretch fell down before their eyes dead.

From Gemman Columba passed to the great monastic school of Clonard, then presided over by S. Finnian, who must not be confounded with his namesake of Moville. Here he was ordained to the priesthood, and after a short residence removed to yet another monastic school—that of S. Mobbi, at Glasnevin, near Dublin. This society, however, was soon dispersed by the plague, and Columba shortly after began his own independent career as a founder of monasteries. About this time he is said to have visited the Continent, and brought back from Tours a gospel which had been in S. Martin's grave for one hundred years. For fifteen years he was actively engaged in the work of founding monasteries, and then occurred the event to which

a famous tradition has ascribed his departure from Ireland. S. Columba is said to have taken the lead in a war between Diarmait, king of Ireland, and his own kinsfolk, the Clan Neill. The cause was comparatively frivolous, and the saint found himself on the morrow of his victory at Cooldrevny, in 561, arraigned before a synod at Teltown on a charge of blood-guiltiness. The tradition at this point becomes confused. The saint is said to have been excommunicated; then, on the intercession of S. Brendan, he was released from his sentence. Another account describes Columba as himself stricken in conscience for the bloodshed he had caused, and seeking the advise of S. Molaise. "The saint bade him leave Ireland as a penance, and go down and win souls for Christ as many as the lives that had been lost in the battle, and never look upon his native land again or set foot upon its soil." Adamnan contents himself with the statement that "in the second year after the battle of Cooldrevny, in the forty-second year of his age, [Columba], wishing to be a pilgrim for Christ's sake, sailed from Scotia [Ireland] to Britain." The restless, adventurous spirit which burned in the breasts of so many of his countrymen had kindled in his breast also. There is no need to seek any special explanation in Columba's case of a proceeding which in his age was quite normal. Yet we can, perhaps, perceive the reason why the north of Britain was the chosen land of his missionary effort. Columba was closely connected by family ties with the royal house of the Scotie kingdom in Argyllshire, and he could hardly

regard with indifference the disasters which had recently befallen that kingdom. In the year 560 Brude, king of the Picts, had completely defeated the Scotie forces and slain their king. The triumph of the Pictish monarch meant also the extinction of Christianity in northern Britain. There was obviously cogent reason why an effort should be made to convert the Picts, and that precisely was the object which Columba set before him.

He found a suitable centre for his missionary efforts in the little island of Hy or—as it came to be called—Iona,* separated from the Ross of Mull by a sound or strait about a mile across. It was thus sufficiently remote for purposes of monastic seclusion, and sufficiently accessible for purposes of missionary organization. It is a small island about three miles long, and varying in breadth from one mile to a mile and a half. It was well adapted for the residence of a monastic community, for it contained a sufficient area of pasture and corn land, and the sea which washed its coasts abounded in fish. This island was destined to rank with the sacred places of history; within a few years it had become one of the most important centres of Church life in Christendom. Within a century from Columba's landing Iona was the religious capital of an empire which owned numerous subjects in Ireland, and was acknowledged by the greatest part of Britain. For awhile it disputed with Rome for the spiritual allegiance of English Christianity.

* See Dr. Fowler's description in the Introduction to his Edition of *Adamnan's Life*, p. 65. The history of the saint is here related in a very thorough and interesting way.

After working for some time among his fellow-countrymen on the opposite mainland, Columba directed his efforts against the very citadel of Pictish Paganism, the capital of King Brude, on the river Ness. His courage was rewarded by success. The monarch was converted, and became the powerful ally of the great missionary. "During the nine years which followed Brude's conversion Columba laboured diligently among the Picts, perfected himself in their language, and frequently visited the king, who granted or confirmed to him the possession of Iona."

In 575 Columba, accompanied by Aedhan, king of the Argyllshire Scots, attended the convention of Drumceatt in Londonderry, where not only was the recognition of the political independence of the Scotie kingdom secured, but also a decree passed exempting women from military service.* This decree is worthy of notice as indicating the influence of Christianity in mitigating the savagery of that fierce time. During the years that followed the Synod of Drumceatt Columba appears on more than one occasion in the repulsive character of a fomenter of sanguinary warfare in Ireland. The martial propensities of the saint were undoubtedly less shocking to his contemporaries than to us, yet they constitute the most serious defect of a very noble character, and detract from the glory of a very noble life. It is thought that the venerable Bede indicates a knowledge of S. Columba's infirmity when he

* The decree seems, however, to have been quickly disregarded, since it is on record that more than a century later, in 697, a similar enactment was passed at the Synod of Birr, held under the influence of S. Columba's successor and biographer, Adamnan.

writes cautiously: "*Whatever he may have been himself* we hold this for certain about him, that he left successors distinguished by great self-control and divine charity, and ordered habit of life." The tradition of his imperious temper impressed itself on subsequent generations, and "with the profound respect in which his memory was held there seems to have been always associated a considerable degree of awe."*

In 597, the very year of S. Augustine's landing in Kent, Columba breathed his last in Iona. The account of his death in Adamnan's biography is touching and beautiful. He had a strong presentiment of death, and spent his last days in preparing for his departure. In spite of his advanced age—he was in his seventy-seventh year—he visited every part of the island, and bade a solemn farewell to the dear familiar scenes of so many labours and devotions. On Saturday, the 8th June, accompanied by his attendant, Diormitius, he visited the barn and blessed it. "I heartily congratulate you, my dear monks," he said, "that even if I must go from you, you will have ample provision for this year." Diormitius sadly protested against his frequent references to his departure. Pledging him to secrecy, the saint proceeded to speak yet more plainly to his companion. "This day is called in the Holy Scripture the Sabbath, which means rest, and truly this day is for me a Sabbath, for it is the last of this present, weary life, in which I keep the

* REEVES, lxxvii.

Sabbath after the fatigues of my labours ; and in this sacred Sunday night, as the Scripture says, I shall go the way of my fathers. For now my Lord Jesus Christ deigns to invite me ; to Him I say, I will depart this coming night, since He Himself bids me come. For so it has been revealed to me by the Lord Himself." Leaving the barn the old man set out on his return to the monastery, but feeling weary he sate down awhile on a disused millstone. While thus he rested himself the old white horse which carried the milk-pails to and fro between the cow-house and the kitchen came up to him and thrust its nose into his bosom, shedding tears abundantly, and sobbing with an almost human affliction. Diormitius would have driven it away, but the saint interfered. "Leave it alone," he said, "leave my friend alone, let him pour out his bitter grief into this bosom of mine. See, though thou art a man, and hast reason, thou couldest in no wise have known of my departure, unless I had myself declared it to thee awhile since ; but the Creator Himself has somehow revealed clearly to this brute and unreasoning creature that his master is about to go from him." And with these words he gave his blessing to the affectionate animal. Returning to the monastery he betook himself to his favourite employment of transcribing the Scriptures. It was to be the last time. He was at work on the Psalter, and he reached the words, "*But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*" He laid down his pen. "Here," he said, "I must cease ; let Baithene (his successor) write the rest." Then he

attended vespers in the church, and after the service was over bade solemn farewell to the brethren, over whom for so many years he had presided.

"My sons," said the old man, "I address to you these my last words, that ye may have unfeigned charity and peace among yourselves; and if thus ye shall walk after the examples of the holy fathers, God, the comforter of all good men, will help you, and I, abiding with Him, will pray for you; and not only will the necessities of this present life be sufficiently provided by Him, but also the rewards of the eternal inheritance, prepared for those who obey the divine commands, shall be granted you." He retired for a brief repose, but when at midnight the bell rang for mattins, which were celebrated according to ancient custom a little before daybreak, Columba rose and hastened to the church before the rest. Diormitius followed him, and found him lying before the altar. He raised him, and sitting down, rested his head in his lap. The monks arrived for service carrying candles, and when they perceived the abbot apparently dead they burst out into weeping. Columba opened his eyes and looked around upon them with a radiant countenance; he seemed to be gazing on a vision of angels. Diormitius raised his right hand, and the dying saint, too weak to speak, was able to make the action of blessing. And as he did so his holy spirit fled. *"I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow with them."*

Columba died on the Sunday within the octave of Whit Sunday, which at a later period became the Festival of the Blessed Trinity. On the preceding Whit Sunday Ethelbert had been baptized by S. Augustine. It is one of the most remarkable coincidences in history. The death of one great evangelist coincided with the arrival of another. We celebrate this year a double commemoration, S. Columba's death and S. Augustine's arrival. So the saying is verified: God buries His workmen, and carries on His work. That work continues still, the same work under the conditions of a very different age; our work, brethren, who own the Lordship of the Crucified. Yes, and the difficulties under novel shapes remain the same. Amid the ebb and flow of centuries there is no change in this sphere, where the battle of the Most High is waged. Still "*our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*" We are fellow-soldiers of the great evangelist whose career we have been considering. There is inspiration in the thought of that mystic fellowship which spans the ages. S. Columba and his comrades are something more than names to us. They are still following the old quest, pursuing the old object. In the unity of the Church's prayer they are active and powerful still. "*Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race*

that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." The summons from the sacred past is the summons to work. Christ's message is reaffirmed and handed on with the fresh authentications of saintly lives and heroic achievements. "*We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.*" We may make or mar the reputation of our age. In the long retrospect of a distant future the events of this time will have settled to their true proportions, found their true levels. *There are first which shall be last, and last which shall be first.* This is a very wealthy, luxurious, splendid age, but wealth and luxury and splendour have no abiding greatness. The reputation which endures must have other elements. "*The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*"

CHRISTENDOM IN THE SIXTH CENTURY

Sunday after Ascension, May 30th, 1897, in the Hospital.

“In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”—JUDGES xxi. 25.

ONE of the most important and one of the least common qualities of students of Church History is the faculty of historic imagination. Too often we read the records of the past in forgetfulness of the conditions of the time. Pursuing some special line of inquiry we fail to bring the facts which immediately concern us into due relation with the general course of events, and so we are in danger of taking a false, because an unbalanced and partial view of the period which interests us. Certainly Christian history demands in the student, perhaps in exceptional measure, the power to take a wide view, to bring under observation the whole area of Church life. In order, therefore, to protect ourselves as far as we can from false and defective notions, I propose to review very briefly the aspect of Christendom at the time when the English race was brought within the pale of Christendom.

The first character of the sixth century which arrests us is the lack of any central, commanding

power. The Roman Empire in the West had vanished, and in its place had come the barbarian kingdoms, Franks and Burgundians in Gaul, Suevians and Visigoths in Spain, Ostrogoths and Lombards in Italy, Angles and Saxons in Britain. The Eastern Empire,* indeed, still remained, and during this century reached a degree of power and glory which neither before nor afterwards was attained. Under the rule of the famous Emperor Justinian, by the skill and valour of great generals, Belisarius and Narses, the borders of the empire were extended by the reconquest of Africa, Spain, and Southern Italy. But the Eastern Empire was a name and nothing more beyond the Alps. The Papacy during the sixth century, until in the closing years it is restored to greatness by the virtues and labours of S. Gregory, has a history which is neither creditable nor distinguished. Fourteen pontiffs sat on the throne of S. Peter during the century. There were two contested elections, which resulted in schism: one Pope, Vigilius (537-555), scandalised Christendom by his lack of principle, and was excommunicated by the fifth General Council. For half a century Africa, North Italy, and Illyria persisted in rejecting the authority of the See of Rome. One Pope, John I., died in the prison to which the justly-merited wrath of his sovereign had consigned him. The first formal schism between the Eastern and Western Churches took place at this time, and afflicted Christendom

* For a very careful and interesting account of the Eastern Empire in its ecclesiastical aspects (which are the most important) see *The Church History of the Sixth Century*, by W. H. HUTTON.

for thirty-five years (484-519). Later in the century the seed of a more lasting and disastrous severance was sown in the addition to the Nicene Creed of the Filioque clause. That clause first makes its appearance in the creed laid before the third Council of Toledo in 589. About half a century or more earlier the Athanasian Creed may have been composed, in which the doctrine of the double procession had been asserted.

Christendom, then, was not merely divided politically. Religiously also unity was lacking. The Arian heresy obstinately maintained its ground, both in Spain and Italy. In the former country Catholicism triumphed in the year 589, when King Recared accepted the orthodox faith at the Synod of Toledo, and in the latter there were many evidences of approaching Catholic victory at the close of the century. The East was rent with controversy, which increased in obstinacy and virulence as its ostensible causes became less intelligible and important. The unity of the Church was as far from being realized in the sixth century as in the nineteenth.

The most relentless enemy which the religion of Christ has ever encountered had not yet come on the scene. The Arabian desert had not yet rung with the great prophet's cry, but the time of that advent was near at hand; before the century closed Mohammed had reached the age of 30. The follies and feuds of Christendom were quickly preparing in advance the victorious course of Islam.

Russia, Scandinavia, and Germany were still Pagan. The age was transitional. The old powers had

visibly failed, the new forces were only beginning to make themselves felt. The supreme achievement of the Mediæval Church was the Christianising of the German barbarians. This achievement was vigorously pursued in the sixth century. Indeed, we may say that the century opens with the conversion of the Franks and closes with the conversion of the English. Clovis was baptized by S. Remigius in 496, and Ethelbert by S. Augustine in 597. The noblest missionary career of the Middle Ages belongs to this century.* S. Columba was born in 521 and died in 597. His countrymen were beginning before the age had ended those glorious missionary labours which have immortalised the early Irish Church.

The mightiest forces of mediæval Christianity were monasticism and the Papacy. Both come into clear prominence in the sixth century. The origin of monasticism, in its later and more organized form, may be attributed to two men—Cassiodorus and S. Benedict. The true founder of the mediæval Papacy was Gregory the Great. All three belong to the sixth century. S. Benedict died in 543, Cassiodorus in 575, S. Gregory in 604.

Benedict and Cassiodorus were probably born in the same year, 480. The first was the author of that famous Rule, which rapidly won its way to general acceptance, and has remained ever since the

* This may seem excessive praise. S. Wilfrid in the seventh century, or S. Boniface in the eighth (to name but two great apostles of the period) may seem not less noble: but both were as much the eager protagonists of the Papal Claims as the Evangelists of Christ. S. Columba seems to have had no hierarchic ambitions to confuse and degrade his missionary zeal.

model upon which monastic organizers have framed their institutes. No one can read this noble production without feeling the strength and wisdom of its author; but perhaps the modern student scarcely realizes the real greatness of S. Benedict's achievement until he remembers the character of the society into which this Rule was introduced. The brutality and misery of the age almost exceed belief. We possess in the writings of Gregory, Bishop of Tours, a contemporary picture of the sixth century. Gregory was born in 538 and died in 594. For more than twenty years he was Bishop of Tours, and in that capacity he was a prominent figure in much of the history he relates. The impression left on the mind by a perusal of the *History of the Franks* is both bewildering and depressing. There are kings and officials and laws, but they appear to exercise little authority over the ordinary life of the people. The most terrible excesses of barbarity emerge, so to say, naturally, in the course of the narrative. The wild license of the barbarians has free course in the heart of a population trained for centuries under the system of Imperial Rome. Slavery in its worst form exists; there is practically no check on the power of the master. The full horror of this is only perceived when we bear in mind that very commonly the slaves were Roman provincials, comparatively civilized, and generally Christian, while their owners were the coarse, semi-Pagan Frankish warriors. The Church exists, and is evidently possessed of great influence, but its morals are amazingly low, and the worst villains of the age are clergymen. We get

glimpses of pillar-saints inciting Pagan multitudes to destroy their idols and accept Christianity. The history bristles with miracles; there is evidently a vast reserve of religious conviction, which no scandals will shock and no miseries destroy. Gregory describes a mad world, where violence goes unchecked, and religion has become divorced from morality. Society is in a nightmare of force and fraud. "*In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*"

Turn from this wild scene to the Rule which, about the year 534, Benedict of Nursia had drawn up for the guidance of the monks who had gathered round him at Monte Cassino. The attraction of the cloister is at once explained. Here is intelligible order; here is rational purpose; here is social equality; here is spiritual sanity; here is the hush of the soul in devotion. The keynote of the rule is obedience. "Hearken, O my son, to the precepts of thy master, and incline the ear of thine heart: receive with joy and faithfully fulfil the admonitions of thy loving Father, that thou mayest return by the labour of obedience to Him from Whom thou hast departed through the sloth of disobedience. To thee, therefore, my words are now addressed, whoever thou art, that, renouncing thine own will, dost put on the strong and bright armour of obedience in order to fight for the Lord Christ, our true king. . . . We are, therefore, about to establish a school of the Lord's service, in the setting forth of which we hope to order nothing that is harsh or rigorous. But if anything be somewhat strictly

laid down, according to the dictates of sound reason, for the amendment of vices or the preservation of charity, do not therefore fly in dismay from the way of salvation, whose beginning cannot but be straight and difficult. But as we go forward in our life and in faith, we shall with hearts enlarged and unspeakable sweetness of love run the way of God's commandments; so that never departing from His guidance, but persevering in the monastery until death, we may by patience share in the sufferings of Christ, that we may deserve to be partakers of His kingdom."

Reading the Benedictine Rule we breathe that atmosphere of strong quietude in the service of duty which exhales from the deliberate verse of Wordsworth. Indeed the "Ode to Duty" might fitly stand as the expression of the true spirit of Benedictine monasticism, both in its censure of the age and in its claim on the individual.

"Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same."

S. Benedict made his communities real societies, and insisted on manual labour as an essential part of religious discipline. The Benedictines became the pioneers of European civilization. Wherever they settled, generally in the wildest and most remote district they could find, they reclaimed the wilderness, felled the forest, drained the swamp,

spanned the torrent, changed the whole aspect of the country. To these salutary physical labours they added labours of another kind, and still more beneficent. To the scribes of the Order the world owes its knowledge of the Greek and Latin classics.

This intellectual interest was the gift of Cassiodorus.* This remarkable man, after having passed many years in the most important affairs of State, first as the confidential minister of Theodoric, then practically as the governor of Italy until the end of the Gothic kingdom, retired into religious seclusion for the long remainder of his life. He died in 575 at the age of ninety-six, having set to his Benedictine neighbours an example which they were not slow to follow. "He endowed the monastery of Viviers with his Roman library, containing the accumulations of half a century, which he continued to augment until his death. Not only were the monks incited by his example to the study of classical and sacred literature, he trained them likewise to the careful transcription of manuscripts, in the purchase of which large sums were continually disbursed. . . . The system of which he was the founder took root and spread beyond the boundaries of Italy, so that the multiplication of manuscripts became gradually as much a recognized employment of monastic life as prayer or fasting."

In the year 590 Gregory the Great became

* See Mr. HODGKIN'S *Letters of Cassiodorus*, pp 57-60: "The great merit of Cassiodorus, that which shows his deep insight into the needs of his age and entitles him to the eternal gratitude of Europe, was his determination to utilize the vast leisure of the convent for the preservation of divine and human learning, and for its transmission to after ages."

Bishop of Rome. He succeeded to the Papacy in an evil time. As we have already observed, the sixth century is on the whole a disgraceful period of papal history. The Popes were the subjects and practically the nominees of the Emperor of the East. Their position at Rome was extremely perilous. The Lombards, latest arrivals from the barbarous north, were Arians, and carried the bitterness of religious rivalry into their chronic conflict with the empire in which Rome was still included. Gregory undoubtedly held the highest theory of Papal authority then known to the Christian world, but how far that theory fell short of the modern doctrine is apparent on the face of the Pope's voluminous correspondence. His first step was to send a confession of his faith to the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. He counted himself, and was counted, to belong to a class—the class of patriarchs—in which, though he possessed a primacy, he certainly exercised no solitary and distinctive authority.* In 595 he denounced his brother-patriarch of Constantinople for adopting the title “Œcumenical, or universal Bishop.” “Peter,” he says, “was the first of the apostles, yet neither he nor any of the others would assume the title universal, being all members of the Church under one head, Christ.” Eulogius of Alexandria addressed him as “universal Pope.” Gregory would have none of it. “If you give more to me than is due to me you rob yourself of what is due to you.

* See Note at the end of the Sermon.

Nothing can redound to my honour that redounds to the dishonour of my brethren. If you call me universal Pope you thereby own yourself to be no Pope. Let no such titles be mentioned or ever heard among us."

The title he adopted for himself and handed on to his successors at once illustrates his own humility and rebukes their pride of office. He called himself *Servus servorum Dei*, "Servant of the servants of God."*

Gregory contributed more perhaps than any other Pope to the exaltation of the Roman See, yet how distant in the sixth century are we from the claims of the Papacy in the later Middle Ages, and in our own day! Gregory's contribution to the greatness of the Papacy was the splendid service he rendered to Christendom at a time of crisis. As we read the great Pope's letters, of which no less than 838 are in existence, we are amazed at the range of his activity, the variety of his interests, the mingled strength and sympathy of his character. He was a statesman cast in the true Imperial mould: no land was too distant for his policy. He was a monk, with the virtues and the defects of the monastic character. He was a great Church reformer of the mediæval type. Above all he was a true pastor of souls, and his treatise on the Pastoral Rule became the most popular priest's manual of the Middle Ages. "Leander of Seville, to whom he sent it, circulated it in Spain; the Emperor Mauricius

* This title was not distinctive of the Papacy, but common to bishops in that age.

had it translated into Greek ; Alfred the Great himself translated it into English ; a succession of Synods in Gaul enjoined a knowledge of it on all bishops ; and Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, in the ninth century, says that a copy of it was delivered, together with the book of canons, to bishops at their ordination, with a charge to them to frame their lives according to its precepts." S. Gregory drew to the support of his authority the best conscience of his time, and he handed on the Papacy to his successors raised to a height of power never previously reached. We, members of the English Church, have many reasons for regarding with aversion that famous See of Rome ; yet, in our utmost resentment, we can never forget that by the merciful providence of God to a Roman bishop the English race owed its first knowledge of the Gospel. S. Gregory's virtues have at least this continuous efficacy, to moderate anger and suggest counsels of charity.

We can bear much from the modern proselytizer when we recall the venerated name of "our Father who sent us Baptism." Yet to those who would make of our gratitude an argument for disloyalty to the Church of England, we answer : "We are more faithful to S. Gregory's teaching than those who own the dominion of his successor. Let the Roman Church return to the faith of the great Pope, and the way will be clear for that blessed boon, now apparently so distant, but always so dear to our hearts and so constant in our prayers—the restoration of unity to divided Christendom. Mean-

while it cannot be wholly without effect that both we of the Church which owns Gregory as father, and they of the Church which possesses Gregory's chair, should unite in blessing God for his saintly life and his fruitful labours.

NOTE.—The late Dean Church, in the fascinating and luminous essay on "The Letters of Pope Gregory I." [*v. Miscellaneous Essays*, pp. 205-279], has warned us against basing too much on the Pope's condemnation of the title "Universal Bishop." "The condemnation is, indeed, as absolute as definite reasons and violent language can make it; but the popular controversial use of it, as a condemnation by Gregory of the pretensions of the Roman See, must be considered as an instance of theological boldness or innocence. For it is assumed that Gregory, in condemning the word, absolutely condemned the thing; whereas the truth is that he only condemned the word and title, and that because it had been assumed by his rival at Constantinople, and symbolised his pretensions." The Dean points out the self-contradiction of the Pope's argument. "He seems absolutely unconscious that the same objections might be made to all that he took for granted in his own position and duty. But to be all that the title of Universal Bishop practically and really signified, Gregory certainly made no hesitating claim. He spurned, indeed, the pompous name, as unbecoming a Christian, and as invented by that ostentation and pride of office which he very sincerely despised and hated. And his protest undoubtedly does further exclude that later development of the Papal Office which annulled the independence of bishops, and placed its own delegated authority on their thrones." No one can read the Pope's letters without recognizing the intensity of his faith in the Roman Primacy, and at the same time his utter unconsciousness of the modern super-episcopal notion of the Papacy. S. Gregory would have repudiated with horror the language of the Bishop of Bayonne (which is quite characteristic of the modern Papist). "The Eucharist of the Holy Spirit which renders Him always present under the corporeal substance is the infallible Pope, *Os orbis* . . . It has been said most justly that the Pope is the 'ego' of the Church. . . . The Pope, the visible personification of the Spirit of God . . . The Pope, the incarnation of the Holy Ghost." To be quite just, Father Sydney Smith, S.J., admits that this language is '*not in good taste*'!

S. AUGUSTINE, APOSTLE OF ENGLAND

Sunday after Ascension, May 30th, 1897, in the Hospital.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."—ISAIAH lx. i.

A WELL-KNOWN story relates that the appearance of English slaves exposed for sale in the market-place at Rome first directed the thought of S. Gregory to the project of converting the English.* The zeal of the Roman people is said to have hindered him from attempting in his own person to carry out the idea he had conceived. When in 590 he himself became Pope, he found the time very favourable for a mission to the English. Our heathen ancestors, in common with the whole Saxon race, were weighted in civilized minds with a formidable reputation for cruelty: the history of the Conversion yields little countenance to that reputation. The English seem to have sought for missionaries from the Frankish Church before the Roman mission had been organized. Gregory assigns this as the reason for

* The original documents are collected and translated in a most timely and attractive little volume edited by Canon Mason, and published by the Cambridge Press: *The Mission of St. Augustine*.

sending Augustine in the letter he addressed to the Frankish sovereigns, soliciting their goodwill towards the missionaries. The Pope had already made some preparations for the great undertaking. Candidus, the Administrator of the Estates belonging to the Roman See in Gaul, received orders to purchase English slaves, seventeen or eighteen years old, who might be trained in various monasteries to become the evangelists of their fellow-countrymen. The mission of Augustine was undertaken before this scheme had come to anything. The door by which the faith might enter the island stood open. Ethelbert, king of Kent, the most powerful of all the petty monarchs who had established themselves in the eastern part of Britain, was favourably disposed toward Christianity. For nearly thirty years he had been married to a Christian wife, Bertha, the daughter of the Frankish king of Paris. Her chaplain, Bishop Lindhard, had conducted Christian services at Canterbury, the capital of the kingdom, for that long period. The idea of conversion was neither novel nor unpalatable to the Kentishmen, and, as a matter of fact, their conversion was unusually prompt and unanimous. The outlook, however, appeared to the missionaries themselves so formidable that they besought permission to retire from the undertaking, a request which was summarily and severely rejected. Landing in Thanet some time after Easter in the year 597, probably near the place* now marked by

* Perhaps, however, at Richborough, then an island, where the ruins of the great Roman fortress are still standing. (See the discussion and map in Canon Mason's handbook.)

the granite cross which the piety of the late Lord Granville caused to be erected, Augustine and his companions speedily discovered how baseless had been their fears. The Kentish monarch on hearing of their arrival sent a friendly message, bidding them remain in the Isle of Thanet until he should decide what course to adopt with regard to them. Bede thus relates what followed, and since his narrative contains all that is really known about the first preaching of the Gospel to the English, I make no apology for simply transcribing it here :—

“After some days the king came to the island, and sitting down in the open air he commanded Augustine and his companions to come there to confer with him, for he took care that they should not approach him in any house, obeying an ancient augury, lest if they possessed any magical arts they should trick him into submission by their attack. They, however, were coming clothed not with dæmonic power, but with divine virtue; and bearing for their banner a silver cross and the picture of our Lord and Saviour painted on a board, and singing litanies, they besought the Lord for the eternal salvation both of themselves and of those to whom they had come. And when, sitting down at the king’s command, they preached the Word of Life to him and to all his nobles who were present, he answered saying, ‘The words and promises which ye utter are certainly attractive, but since they are novel and doubtful I cannot assent to them and abandon the beliefs which I, together with the whole English race, have for so long maintained. However, since ye have certainly come hither from a

great distance, and as I seem to perceive ye desired to impart to us also the things which ye hold to be true and excellent, we will not show ourselves hostile to you, but rather we are anxious to receive you with courteous hospitality, and to provide whatever is necessary for your maintenance; nor do we forbid you to unite to the faith of your religion all whom you can [persuade] by your preaching.' He gave them, moreover, a house in the city of Durovernum [*i.e.*, Canterbury], which was the capital of his whole dominion, and as he promised, together with a supply of provisions for their temporal wants, he did not withhold liberty of preaching. Further, it is said that as they approached the city, after their custom, with the holy Cross and the picture of the great King, our Lord Jesus Christ, they sang this litany in unison, 'We beseech Thee, O Lord, in Thy great mercy take away Thy wrath and Thine indignation from this city and from Thy holy House, for we have sinned. Alleluia.'” Bede describes the great impression which was made in Canterbury by the regular religious services, the preaching, above all, the holy living of the missionaries. The little Roman-British church of S. Martin, which had hitherto been used as Queen Bertha's chapel, now became the centre of an active and successful evangelistic work. In a few days Ethelbert himself professed conviction, and on Whit Sunday, June 2nd, 597, probably in S. Martin's (where still is shown the reputed font used on the occasion), received baptism at the hands of Augustine. The process of conversion was now greatly accelerated. Ethelbert is expressly said to have

repudiated all coercion, but none was needed. His subjects displayed the utmost eagerness to follow his example, and on Christmas Day, 597, no less than 10,000 Englishmen received baptism after the primitive fashion in the river Swale, at the mouth of the Medway. In the early summer of the following year S. Gregory wrote to his friend and fellow-patriarch, Eulogius of Alexandria, a letter, which is still extant, in which he gives an account of the English mission. This letter is in many respects so interesting that I make no apology for reading to you the part which concerns our present subject. The Pope is replying to a letter from Eulogius, and this is what he says: "Since in your good deeds there is this additional advantage that you share your joy with others, I return your favour to you, and send you tidings not less pleasing than your own, [for you must know that] since the English race, dwelling in a corner of the universe, continued until now without the faith, given up to the worship of stocks and stones, I decided, by the help of your prayer, that I ought to send to them, with God's assistance, a monk of my monastery to preach the Gospel. He, by my permission, has been consecrated bishop by the bishops of Germany, by whose assistance he was led on his way to preach to that aforesaid race in the ends of the earth, and just now letters have reached us with tidings of his safety and work, stating that both he and his companions are distinguished in that nation by such miracles as seem to rival the powers of the apostles. Moreover, on Christmas Day last more than 10,000 English are

reported to have been baptized by our said brother and co-bishop. I have told you all this that you may know what you achieve in Alexandria by your sermons, and in the ends of the earth by your prayers; for your prayers are there where you are not, and their blessed effects are manifest where you are."

You will notice that the Pope speaks of Augustine as already consecrated "by the bishops of the Germanies." The consecration took place in Arles, and the principal officiating prelate was Vergilius, Bishop of that city, and Metropolitan of Southern Gaul. Thus the episcopal succession of our Church was derived in the first instance from that Church of Southern Gaul which appears to have derived its origin from the Churches of Western Asia Minor, over which S. John himself had appointed bishops. The Pope speaks of the miracles which had accompanied the preaching of the missionaries. At a later date he wrote to S. Augustine a long and very earnest letter, warning him against the spiritual pride which might be provoked in him by these marvels. It would be difficult to take exception to this testimony. It is strictly contemporary, unquestionably honest, presumably well-informed. Yet when we remember the conditions under which men thought and lived and wrote in the Middle Ages we shall not find much difficulty in rejecting the miracles, while retaining undiminished our respect for those who believed themselves, and were believed by their contemporaries to work them. This is not the place and this is not the occasion for a discussion of ecclesiastical miracles,

yet I was compelled to make this brief reference to a subject which will, I suppose, always divide devout opinion.

When Augustine landed in Kent he was well aware of the existence of the British Church; indeed, had he been ignorant when he arrived he could not long have remained so, for the memorials of the banished Church were numerous and recent. S. Martin's was not the only surviving fabric. We learn from Bede that among the earliest results of Ethelbert's conversion was the restoration of churches. It was natural, and indeed necessary, that Augustine should enter into relation with the British bishops, and come to some arrangement with them as to their mutual relations and their possible co-operation in further missionary effort. Before meeting the Britons Augustine addressed Gregory on the subject. The seventh question of that remarkable series which he sent to the Pope, and which, together with the Pope's answers, has been happily preserved, raises the question of his ecclesiastical position on the one hand with the bishops of Gaul, on the other hand with the bishops of Britain. Gregory's reply refused all authority over the former, and granted absolute authority over the latter. There is an evident tone of contempt in the direction: "But as for all the bishops of Britain we commit them all to your care, that the unlearned may be taught, the weak strengthened by persuasion, and the perverse corrected by authority." At the same time the Pope sent a scheme for the ecclesiastical reorganization of the whole island.

There were to be two metropolitans, the one at London, the other at York, and each was to have subject to him twelve suffragan bishops. This scheme reflects little credit on its author. It assumes in the Pope an astonishing ignorance, both of the actual political state of the English, and of the religious condition of the island. The scheme was plainly in excess of the Pope's authority. He had no right by a stroke of the pen to destroy the ancient British dioceses, nor had he any title to the obedience of the Irish missionaries who, apparently without his knowledge, had just converted the northern part of Britain. The scheme remained a dead letter from the first; indeed, Augustine never seems to have made an attempt to put it into practice.

Armed with the Papal grant of jurisdiction, the Archbishop of Canterbury met the representatives of the Church in two successive conferences, at Augustine's Oak and at Bangor. Bede relates at some length the history of these conferences. His dislike of the Britons is very apparent, yet even through his prejudiced narrative we can discern some justifications for the impracticable attitude which they finally adopted. Augustine's proposals were unpalatable, and they were not commended by his manner. His arrogance disgusted men who were justly suspicious of his pretensions. After prolonged debate the Archbishop proposed his ultimatum: The Britons must abandon their mode of reckoning Easter, adopt the Roman fashion of administering or "completing" baptism, and unite in

missions to the English ; other differences might be tolerated. "We will do none of these things, neither will we have you for our Archbishop," was the reply of the Britons. Augustine is said to have concluded the proceedings with prophesying the calamities which would fall upon the British Church at the hands of that English race which it would not attempt to convert.

Foiled in the attempt to secure the co-operation of the native Church of the island, Augustine returned to Kent, and for the brief remainder of his life devoted himself to the consolidation and extension of the Church in the kingdom of Ethelbert, and as far as the influence of that monarch extended. Another episcopal see was established at Rochester, and Justus was consecrated bishop of the West Kentishmen. Ethelbert bestowed an ample endowment on the cathedral-church of S. Andrew, and it is not uninteresting to know that these primitive endowments are yet owned by the See of Rochester. The East Saxons, under the influence of their powerful neighbour, received a bishop, whose throne was placed at London. This was the extreme limit of Augustine's success, and it was not long maintained. On the death of Ethelbert the East Saxons relapsed into Paganism, and expelled their bishop. It is true to say that the conversion of Kent, and only of Kent, can be directly ascribed to the labours of Augustine. When, in 604, the first Archbishop of Canterbury died quietly in his cathedral-city the English were still, with the solitary exception of the Jutes in Kent, a Pagan race. But a solid foundation

had been laid, a good beginning had been made—the conscience of the great Western Church had been directed upon the missionary task—and a door had been opened which would no more be closed. Others would enter into Augustine's labours; others whom he himself, perhaps, would have regarded with misgiving and dislike. In the final result the principal share in the conversion of the English is found to belong to Celtic rather than to Roman Christianity. But it is one thing to begin a work, another thing to carry on a work already begun. To Augustine belongs the unique distinction of leading the van of that noble army of evangelists which won for Christ the primitive English race. This is his claim to the glorious title by which he is known in the record of the Christian Church, the Apostle of England. Not a great man, if we may judge from the history of his life—a narrow man, perhaps, trained in the hard, narrow monasticism of the time; a man with very obvious faults of temper, apt to be overbearing, to make much of trifles, to indulge in harsh and exasperating speech. All this, certainly, but also and as certainly a man of a stern and single-minded dutifulness, who having received in the providence of God a great and difficult task to perform, performed it honestly and thoroughly. It is surely no mean apology for Augustine that men, looking back upon his labours after the lapse of thirteen centuries, should be able to say of them that they formed the indestructible basis upon which all that is highest and best in English history has ever since reposed. More

attractive personalities there have been, but no more fruitful ministry since the days of the Twelve Apostles.*

* Canon Bright, who has made the early history of the English Church the subject of a delightful volume, has recently borne ample and generous testimony to the merits of S. Augustine in a sermon preached in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, on June 27th, and published in the *Guardian* of June 30th, 1897.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE SIXTH CENTURY

Whit Sunday, June 6th, 1897, in the Hospital.

“Another parable set He before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field : which indeed is less than all seeds : but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.”—S. MATTHEW xiii. 31, 32.

IN a previous discourse we have considered the aspect of Christendom in the sixth century, and to some extent we then anticipated the discussion with which we are now concerned. Christianity in that age carried on the surface the evidences of a long and chequered history. The religion of Christ had received many accretions from sources external and not always wholesome. In the belief of the Church great changes had taken place, in the worship and discipline of the Church the fact was equally apparent. There had certainly been at work in Christianity powerful forces, shaping creed and system. The simple Gospel, as it came under the pressure of actual contact with human nature, as it entered into the mixed, turbid, violent stream of

social life, as it became the subject of criticism, of experiment, of speculation, rapidly acquired a new appearance. Christianity has often been compared to a river, which rises in distant hills, a tiny crystal stream issuing from perennial springs, but which, as it passes through the country on its way to the ocean, receives into its volume many contributions, which change its aspect and contaminate its purity. It takes the colour of the soil through which it carves its bed, it bears on its broadening bosom the various craft of commerce and pleasure, it receives the pollutions of the cities and villages which are planted on its banks, and when it rushes at last into the sea its dark and copious flood presents a startling contrast with its earlier aspect. The comparison is not wholly inadequate, and it may perhaps assist us to understand the rapid transformation which necessarily overtook the Christian religion when once, having finally cast aside the swathing bands of its parent Judaism, it committed itself boldly to its fortunes as a universal faith.

The cessation of the persecutions after the conversion of Constantine removed the principal hindrance to change. The Church and Society no longer faced one another as deadly antagonists. A truce had been proclaimed, and the truce slowly matured into an alliance. Christianity conformed itself with astonishing success to the Imperial system, and thereby conferred upon the empire a new lease of life; but the rapid degeneration of Christian morals which followed the union of Church and State was a heavy price to pay for tranquillity.

The alliance between the empire and Church was intimate and protracted, and in the general effect beneficent, but it was never either natural or creditable. The traditions of Rome were incorrigibly Pagan, and in proportion as they were appropriated by the Church, Christianity receded from original purity. So close had become the union of Church and State, however, that when the ruin of the latter was seen to be imminent, the end of all things seemed to many Christians assured. Yet the downfall of the empire, terrible as at the time the disaster seemed, was to become the condition of new and nobler achievements. The conversion of the barbarian races of Europe forms the most splendid chapter of Christian history; but for that also a price had to be paid. Superstition, the creature of barbaric ignorance, infected religion, and ultimately so corrupted it that in certain countries and in certain centuries the Church has seemed to contradict herself, and to minister rather to the perpetuation of social evil than to its abolition. In the sixth century the influence of the rude Teutonic converts upon the religion they adopted was already apparent, though the worse results were yet distant.

Necessarily the importance of the hierarchy was increasing. The organization of the clergy was almost the only organization which survived the general wreck of Imperial order. The bishops became the mediators between the conquered and their conquerors; their sacred office secured to them a certain authority over the fiercest barbarians; they and they alone stood between the masses of the

people and an oppression, which was equally unchecked by law and unmitigated by culture. The social services of the hierarchy in that desperate time justly enhanced its authority ; but there was, further, the definite transference into Christianity of Judaic and Pagan conceptions of the priesthood. The process of barbarian conversion was too rapid to secure in the new converts any real understanding of the new faith. Thousands of warriors, induced by the example of their tribal monarch, or awed by some occurrence which appeared to them miraculous, would profess themselves desirous of baptism. The preparatory teaching was of the slightest kind ; the background of Paganism in mind and life remained a perennial and prolific spring of corrupting superstition. The Christianity of numbers must have been little more than the thinnest veneer upon the old Paganism. To the Christian clergy were readily, nay inevitably, attributed the qualities of the Pagan priests, and so a new and alien sacerdotalism invaded the Christian religion. The history of the Church becomes the history of the clergy. The sixth century, and the ages which immediately followed, witnessed perhaps the climax of episcopal authority.

Christianity, then, when it was brought to our English ancestors, was already a corrupted thing. The experience of six eventful centuries had not been without effect ; and since the powers of the world had reconciled themselves to the Church, the development of superstition had been rapid. We may recognize the signs of the time in many

directions. It was now that Christianity began to wear that idolatrous aspect which has provoked powerful and destructive reactions, but has never since been wholly lost. The worship of the Blessed Virgin, of which the primitive Church presents no trace, now made rapid strides. The Incarnation Controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries had as one result a great development of the Christian belief about our Lord's Mother. From the fourth century her perpetual virginity became the established doctrine of Christendom; her preservation from sin was next generally maintained. Festivals were multiplied in her honour. First, that of the Annunciation, then that of the Purification, then that of her Ascension; finally, in the seventh century, that of her Birth. Undoubtedly among the Germans their native veneration for the female sex, which arrested the admiring notice of the Roman historian, predisposed them to exalt still further the Mother of Christ. It would be equally unhistorical and unfortunate to regard this developed Mariolatry as wholly bad. Few students of mediæval society will be disposed to question that from this source the modern world has drawn its chivalrous doctrine of womanhood; but that doctrine is inherent in Christianity, and it may be doubted whether even the rudeness of these times really needed that it should be emphasized so crudely. Whatever the excuse may be worth, it no longer can be pleaded in excuse for the modern Mariolatry, beside which even the mediæval doctrine seems moderate. The sixth century was a coarse

and superstitious age, but in this respect it yields to the historian no adequate parallel to the coarseness and superstition of modern Rome.

The early Church had been rigorously intolerant of any approach to idolatry; images were identified with idols, and regarded with horror; but in this respect also the ancient severity had been relaxed.

"In the fifth century authentic miraculous pictures of Christ, the apostles and the God-mother, made their appearance, and with them began image-worship properly so called, with lighting of candles, kissing, burning incense, bowing of the knee, prostrations." *

From the earliest times Christians had revered the martyrs; the sentiment was equally natural and salutary, but it rapidly passed into extremes, and became the slave of gross superstition. The worship of relics was the offspring of the persecutions, and in the prosperous age when martyrdoms were a memory it received an immense extension. The history of Religious Relics is one long chapter of insolent, squalid, sustained fraud. S. Gregory,† himself an ardent believer in the virtue of relics, relates that certain Greeks were arrested at Rome in the act of digging up bodies in the neighbourhood

* KURTZ, *Church History*, vol. i. p. 364, authorized translation.

† *v. Greg. Epist.*, lib. iv. num. 30. The Pope is refusing a request for relics of S. Paul which had been addressed to him by the Empress Constantina. He thinks it profane to touch the bodies of the saints, and doubts the possibility of doing so. The Greeks, indeed, say that they often do it; but then some of them are *known* to be rogues, and the rest might be such. It is a very curious letter.

of S. Paul's Church, and that they confessed their purpose of representing the bones as relics of saints. Gregory of Tours witnesses to similar frauds. The credulity of Christendom, however, was indifferent to any scandals, and the demand for relics generated a thriving trade. The demand was limitless, but not so the supply, until the commercial spirit boldly excluded the devotional in providing for the faithful the objects of their desire.

The alleged discovery of the true Cross by the Empress Helena created a new and popular variety of relic. Fragments of venerated wood were speedily scattered over the Christian world. Some of these relics have survived to our own day, and perhaps there is no more startling example of the obstinate unreasonableness of mankind, wherever its affections or its interests are engaged, than the fact that at the end of the nineteenth century not only are the virtues of these questionable baubles extensively believed by the faithful, but their authenticity elaborately defended by the learned.* The practice of making pilgrimages had rooted itself in Christendom, and led to numerous abuses. The common explanation of all these superstitious developments is the reflex action of Paganism upon victorious Christianity.

While there were thus numerous evidences of corruption already apparent, yet in the sixth century

* A notable example is the "Holy Coat" of Trêves, the genuineness of which is gravely defended with elaborate argumentation. The solemn logic of credulity is equally ludicrous and tiresome. Yet it is not ineffectual with the multitude.

many of the worst abuses of historic Christianity were still unknown. The ancient penitential system survived, and perhaps, by its relentless rigour, carried the notion of moral law into the understandings of simple men more effectually than any formal instructions.* The spectacle of the penitents—squalid, outcast, well-nigh desperate—provided a commentary on the doctrines of the Church which all could understand. The system was, however, manifestly falling into desuetude. The practice of private confession was steadily gaining ground, and the appearance of the Penitentials marks the fact.

The rigid definitions of the Scholastic Theologians had not yet overlaid Christian theology. Much of the liberty of earlier times still existed. Thus the "Seven Sacraments" had not yet been determined, and one of the number, the so-called Sacrament of Extreme Unction, did not make its appearance until a later period.† The Canon of Scripture had long been definitely fixed, and the distinction between

* "Whenever the faithful were gathered together in church the penitents were grouped apart in their hideous squalor, and either left the church before the sacred mysteries, or if they were allowed to remain, they were not admitted to the Eucharist, but were brought forward to be prayed for and received the imposition of hands—in short, their humiliation was utilized to the utmost as a spectacle and a warning for the benefit of the congregation." v. LEA., *Auricular Confession and Indulgences*, vol. i. p. 29.

† v. the learned and interesting notes in Dr. J. B. Mayor's *Ep. of S. James*, pp. 158–161. "There is, I believe, no recorded instance during the first eight centuries of the anointing of the sick being deferred, as having only a spiritual efficacy, to the point of death, except among the Heracleonites" (an early Gnostic sect). It was not until the 12th century that the name Extreme Unction came into use, and in the next century the *Sacrament* was established.

the "Apocryphal" and "Canonical" Books had not yet been abandoned; but the general ignorance favoured the tendency to confine the study of the Scriptures to the clergy, while the popularity of the allegorical method of interpretation went far to neutralize the restraining influence of the sacred text upon the theology of the age. The doctrine of Purgatory was evidently establishing itself, and none more effectually hastened the process than S. Gregory; but the amazing abuses of the indulgence system were yet far distant. Immersion was still the general mode of administering Holy Baptism. Communion in one kind was still regarded as a heretical absurdity; but the ancient frequency of receiving the Sacrament* was rapidly passing away, and probably the modern practice of yearly communion was already general. Preaching was regarded as properly the task of the bishop. The services of religion tended to become more elaborate and magnificent. The sixth century, it is said, witnessed the introduction of the custom of singing prayers, readings, and consecrations. Church music became a fine art. The name of S. Gregory is associated with the ecclesiastical chant, of which he

* In no particular does the practice of the modern church contrast more sharply with that of the early centuries than in this matter. *Then* abstinence from Communion was a crime, and punished as such by excommunication; *now* it is becoming the custom, and on the way to become the rule. The early Tractarians, basing themselves on primitive Christianity, urged frequent Communion. The modern Ritualists, following the Roman lead, are taking the opposite line. To my knowledge, confirmation candidates have been taught not to communicate more often than four times in the year; but, of course, always to "attend Mass."

was the author. Undoubtedly the public worship of the Church became more orderly, reverent, and splendid, but against this must be placed the rapid ousting of the congregation from any direct share in the service. Latin, moreover, was already an unknown tongue over great part of Western Christendom.

Passing from the ecclesiastical to the social sphere, the Christian conscience in the sixth century was tolerant of much that seems to us manifestly incompatible with discipleship; but clearly that conscience was vigilant, active, and advancing. It is reflected in the social influence of the Church, of which the records of the time contain many remarkable illustrations. The canons of Church councils held during the century may be specifically mentioned. These canons indicate much superstition, and in some respects an astonishing moral obtuseness on fundamental matters, such as, for example, the guilt of homicide; but in the main their testimony is reassuring. Slowly and almost unconsciously, but steadily and effectually notwithstanding, the leaven of the Gospel was working in the mass of society. The Church hardly realized the practical effect of her own principles. Thus in the familiar instance of slavery which emerges—and the fact is noteworthy—so frequently in the canons. The Church herself was a large slave-owner, and she guarded her property in slaves not less jealously than her other possessions. Bishops and abbots were prohibited from manumitting the slaves belonging to their churches and monas-

teries. The Ordination of slaves was directly forbidden, though the ordained slave could not again be sent to manual work. Yet all the while the Church was steadily hostile to the institution of slavery. The slave was regarded, in all but the article of liberty, as a man; his life was sacred; his marriage was celebrated with Christian rites; his body rested in consecrated ground; his position was softened and strengthened in many ways; certain holidays were secured to him; from the brutal violence of an oppressive master he could seek protection in the sanctuaries of the Church, and though the protection he received was precarious and partial, it was not ineffectual. Thus, in spite of many abuses and much superstition, the religion of Christ fulfilled in the society of the sixth century the function which is described in the Gospel under the significant metaphors of light, salt, and leaven. The extent of the corruption is really an evidence of this. The Church had entered frankly into the world's life, and was grappling boldly with the monstrous evils which darkened and burdened it. Having regard to all the conditions of the time, it may well be questioned whether Christianity ever before or since has so potently and beneficently influenced society. The modern student must chasten his disgust of superstition by the reflection that superstition is relative to the general intelligence, and judge the Christianity of the sixth century by the intellectual and moral standards of the age.

Two conclusions will, I think, suggest themselves from a review of the sixth century. The one is

polemical, the other general. The polemical inference is obvious. Whatever may be doubtful about the Christianity which S. Augustine brought to our ancestors thirteen centuries ago, this is clear: it was not identical with modern Romanism. It is always rather futile to attempt to establish identities over such long periods, and I am far indeed from suggesting that S. Augustine would have found himself altogether at ease with modern Anglicanism; but this at least may be said: As an Anglican he would not have found himself required to profess any doctrine which he had not been taught, or to alter in any important degree the practice in which he had been trained; whereas, judged by the standard of the modern Roman Church, he would have found both his creed and his practice gravely, if not fatally defective.

The late Lord Selborne justly expresses the evidence of history in these words: "If (apart from the breach of ecclesiastical intercommunion which undoubtedly took place at the time of the Reformation, and the moral responsibility for that breach) the authorized doctrine and practice of the Church of England at the present day should be compared with that of the Christian Church generally—including the Church of Rome—in the days of Augustine, it would require a strong application of the theological microscope to discover any really substantial differences between them. Almost, if not absolutely, everything which the Church of England has since rejected as usurpation or corruption was then unknown." *

* *Defence of the Church of England against Disestablishment*, p. 7.

The general inference is hardly less obvious and certainly not less important. The appeal to history must not be lightly made or carelessly conducted. The answer of the past to the questionings of the present is neither so clear nor so satisfactory as controversialists are wont to make out. The history of the Church is a very complex history; the chalice which has been poured forth into human life has been strangely mingled. The student must be prepared for disappointment, for correction, for instruction; yet he will be richly rewarded for whatever toil in honesty, and patience, and faith he bestows upon his subject. At least he may hope to take from his studies a large tolerance of human error, a generous reluctance to register spiritual failure on the evidence of ecclesiastical corruption, and, perhaps, some confirmation of the old Christian conviction that above the changeful centuries, with their various and distinctive burdens of scandal and failure, presides the sleepless Providence of the Eternal, pursuing without intermission or deflection His sovereign purposes of righteousness and mercy, *Whose way is in the sea, and Whose paths in the great waters, and Whose footsteps are not known.*

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

Whit Sunday, June 6th, 1897, in the Hospital.

“Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”—EPHESIANS iv. 3.

ANY review of Church History, however cursory and superficial, must suggest grave and difficult questions. Christianity claims to be divine, and the first ideas which are conveyed by that august and awful character are those of permanence and immunity from change; yet, as a matter of fact, those ideas do not at first sight seem to be reflected in Christian History. The transformations of Christianity have been so numerous and so complete that the doubt rises irresistibly whether or not there are in Christianity any fixed and changeless elements at all. The religion of Christ appears to share with all other religions that servitude to circumstances which stamps them all with a provisional and transitory character. Theories of continuity become necessarily doctrines of development, and religion—even Christ's religion—is always in some sense the creature of the age. The contradictions of the history are amazing. The heresy of one century is the orthodoxy of

another ; the anomaly of one generation is the habit of the next ; the tests and terms of Christian membership vary from age to age. Always the same awful claims side by side with the same bewildering inconsistencies ; always the same fanatical obstinacy linked to the same accommodating receptiveness. Mortal sin passes into essential discipline ; there is no permanence of moral perspective. The triumph of Christianity seems to be but a Pyrrhic victory at best, in which the conqueror suffers scarcely less than the conquered. Doctrine, discipline, worship, ritual—all bear upon them the same fatal instability ; they are the creatures of experience—fleeting, mobile, accommodating ; they express the influence of forces external to Christianity, and not always friendly. “Is then the history of Christian Society the history of a great evasion?” asked the sanest of modern Christian thinkers, with reference to the unquestionable contrast between the Church, “as it was first called forth out of the world,” and “Christian Society as we know it, and live in it, and on the whole take it for granted.” We may recast the question to match our present purpose. “Is then the history of the Catholic Church the history of a great delusion? What intelligible meaning can the words of the creed possess when we read them in the light of Christian History, ‘I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church?’” Is there any real unity possible to a society which takes the colour of every age and reflects the idiosyncrasies of every race? How in the name of historic truth can any man maintain that the Church is one? These are the questions

which press for answer at the conclusion of a historical inquiry, and which, perhaps, may find an answer on this great festival.

The evidence of Christian History would seem to be fatal to all rigid doctrines of an external unity. Manifestly the Graces of God have not respected ecclesiastical theories. Heretics like Ulphilas have been as effectual in the mission-field as their orthodox contemporaries; schismatics (and, indeed, heretics also), such as on the modern Roman doctrine were the Irish missionaries, were none the less abundantly blessed in their labours. In our own day no evangelistic efforts have been more heroic and more successful than those of the Presbyterians. Moreover, it is manifest that saintliness cannot be cooped up within any ecclesiastical limits. Some systems may favour one type of moral excellence, and some another, but all Christian systems have proved themselves capable of producing types of character which can be rightly called saintly. The most arrogant and the most futile of all ecclesiastical pretensions is that which would claim for any Church a monopoly of saints.

In condemning exclusive theories of Church unity Christian History establishes a unity of another kind. Christianity certifies its Divine character not in the political sphere by the miracle of an immutable institution, but in the moral sphere by the various but accordant testimony of saintly lives. So essentially divine is the Religion of Christ that no stupidity, or superstition, or arrogance, or wilfulness of man can wholly destroy its moral force, or

altogether inhibit its spiritual activity. The worst Christian systems* are not so bad as to bar the flow of Divine Grace into human souls, and neutralize the influence of discipleship upon human lives.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

But here let us guard against a generous error. Rigid theories of external unity are indeed condemned by the impartial and irreversible verdict of Christian History; but the same authority certifies the naturalness, the permanence, and the benefit of external unity. We may not claim the sanction of history for doctrines of anarchy, whether in the sphere of faith, or in that of discipline. Christianity has always done its work in the world through the agency of an organized society. It has always been sacramental, always Divinely Ordered. Amid the infinite variety of theories and systems, these two marks have always attached to Christianity as a power in human life. It addresses men through an ordained, that is, a Divinely-commissioned Ministry; it approaches them with visible Sacraments, certifying and carrying Divine Grace. Moreover, it would be an error to identify these two characteristics with the Catholic Church, although, obviously, in the Catholic Church they have been most evidently and consistently exhibited. In varying degree, and with

* I have in mind notably the Salvation Army—a system which is only semi-Christian, but which yet has not been able to hinder very gracious Christian results in individuals.

great variety of external form, heretic and orthodox, sectary and Catholic, have here found agreement. All alike have gone about their work with these methods.* Non-sacramental, non-ordered Christianity has been sterile, if not unknown. We go back to the New Testament, and we find that these two elements of historic Christianity are directly referred to the Divine Founder. Christ Himself instituted Sacraments and ordained a Ministry. Upon the primitive institution history records that much was subsequently built, much that was useful, excellent, enduring, much also that was the reverse. Always, however, the Sacraments of the Gospel—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—held their sovereign place, and always, though not in later times universally, the Ministerial Office which the Lord first gave to His apostles has been jealously maintained and transmitted by Ordination. The doctrine of Apostolic Succession is an appeal to history, and, it can hardly be disputed, a successful appeal. It would seem impossible for any Christian who accepts the Appeal to History to recede from that doctrine. But history is a present teacher, and we may not wisely or reasonably shut our ears to the lessons of contemporary events. Christianity, as we know it, is largely non-Episcopal, and non-Episcopalian Christians are not less rich in moral fruits than other

* It is the plain fact that *the conviction* of a Divine Commission, and the belief in the spiritual efficacy of "means of grace" (whether *called* sacraments or not), are as real among Protestants as among Catholics. The historic justifications may be less in the one case than in the other, but the strength of the conviction is the same in both.

Christians. The graces of the Holy Ghost are as apparent in the Presbyterian, the Lutheran, and the Wesleyan as in the Anglican, the Roman Catholic, and the Greek. History offers explanations of the great departure from Christian precedent which took place at the Reformation. It is hard to deny the cogency of the case for Protestantism, yet if Christian History be in any measure a trustworthy guide, the repudiation of the Episcopal government involved the loss of an original element of Christianity; nor can it be denied that the loss of external unity has enormously weakened the influence of the Church in the world. We must acquiesce, apparently, in a position which is neither logical nor popular. On the one hand, we cannot either abandon an ecclesiastical *régime* which, as far as we can perceive, derives its authority from our Lord, or surrender an ideal which is the assumption of the New Testament and the legacy of the primitive ages; on the other hand, we cannot use the language of denunciation or contempt towards the non-Episcopal systems, which have such considerable historical justification, and are so manifestly blessed of God. The Witness of the Past prohibits our union: the Witness of the Present requires our sympathy and respect. We must stand apart, but not in bitterness. We can rejoice in every saintly life, in every heroic achievement, "*giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,*" waiting in mutual charity, in the generous rivalry of unselfish endeavour, the coming of the time when the Lord Himself shall *comfort His People, and have compassion upon His afflicted,*

Meanwhile, we should accustom ourselves to distinguish between the abiding and the transitory elements in Christianity. That which is secular, belonging to the *sæculum* or age; that which is ethnical, or local, or contingent on intellectual and social and political conditions will pass, as it has ever passed; but that which is common to all Christians in all lands and in all ages will endure. That is the canon of criticism which must determine our spiritual allegiance. It is only the old Catholic test of S. Vincent expressed in a modern way, and it carries far. Some may perhaps object that under the rigid application of that test Christianity would possess no permanent elements at all. I answer that the case is not so. Read any Christian writing of any age, and inquire what is the explanation of its hold on you. Is it not this one fact, that every Christian composition, in measure as it is Christian, expresses discipleship to Jesus Christ? It is as disciples that Christians are united, in spite of that perplexing instability, to which history bears testimony.

The Apostle Paul recognized this when he summed up Christianity in the concise confession, the Alpha and Omega of the disciple's faith, "*Jesus is Lord.*" And that confession he declared to be a Divine gift. "*No man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.*" If discipleship, then, be the original and essential character of Christianity, we have found the true principle of continuity. Regard from this standpoint the history of the Church, and it no longer has an aspect so painful and so melancholy. From the

first century to the nineteenth one ideal leads captive the hearts of men. Various apprehended, indeed, at different times, yet always commanding a homage both ample and willing, the ideal of the Gospel has remained the common possession of every Christian generation. It is the enigma of Christianity and its vindication. "In the same living person," writes the late Dean Church, "each age has seen its best idea embodied; but its idea was not adequate to the truth—there was something still beyond. An age of intellectual confusion saw in the portraiture of Him in the Gospels the ideal of the great teacher and prophet of human kind, the healer of human error, in whom were brought together and harmonized the fractured and divergent truths scattered throughout all times and among all races. It judged rightly, but that was only part. The monastic spirit saw in it the warrant and suggestion of a life of self-devoted poverty as the condition of perfection. Who can doubt that there was much to justify it? Who can doubt that the reality was something far wider than the purest type of monastic life? The Reformation saw in Him the great improver, the breaker of the bonds of servitude and custom, the quickener of the dead letter, the stern rebuker of a religion which had forgotten its spirit; and doubtless He was all this, only He was infinitely more. And now in modern times there is the disposition to dwell on Him as the ideal exemplar of perfect manhood, great in truth, great in the power of goodness, great in His justice and His forbearance, great in using and yet being above the world, great in infinite love, the opener of

men's hearts to one another, the well-spring never to be dry of a new humanity. He is all this, and this is infinitely precious. We may 'glorify Him for it, and exalt Him as much as we can ; but even yet will He far exceed.' That one and the same form has borne the eager scrutiny of each anxious and imperfect age, and each age has recognized with boundless sympathy and devotion what it missed in the world, and has found in Him what is wanted. Each age has caught in those august lineaments what most touched and swayed its heart. And as generations go on and unfold themselves they still find that character answering to their best thoughts and hopes ; they still find in it what their predecessors had not seen or cared for ; they bow down to it as their inimitable pattern, and draw comfort from a model who was plain enough and universal enough to be the Master as of rich and poor, so of the first century and the last."

"*No man can say Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.*" The unwavering loyalty to the Evangelic ideal, the progressive appreciation of what that ideal involves, the persistent pursuit of it amid every discouragement—these are the "*fruits of the Spirit.*" The order of the Creed suggests the true standpoint from which to regard Church History. "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church." There has been present in the history a supernatural force—a principle of guidance, a power of recovery, an inspiration, a spirit of prophecy. Whit Sunday inaugurates and interprets the life of the Church. Christ's promise did not fail of effect, though its

fulfilment has not matched the hopes or satisfied the impatience of Christians. "*Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these things shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.*"

The "*unity of the Spirit*" is a real unity, though it may not be brought into harmony with the claims of churches and denominations. At least in two spheres it is capable of being reached and maintained even under the difficult conditions of a divided Christendom. In the sphere of devotion all true disciples are one. They unite in common adoration of the "*one Lord*" by the present inspiration of the same Holy Spirit. There is comfort in the thought. In view of "*our unhappy divisions*"—so obdurate, so shameless, so unnecessary, so scandalous—we stay our souls on the assurances of S. Paul. "*The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity, for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*" In the sphere of service all true disciples are one. Who thinks it worth while to distinguish where the conflict against evil is in question? Christians have never been divided in this respect. Discipleship has always been held to involve the life of righteousness and the warfare against sin. "*The unity of the Spirit*" must mean the combination of disciples for righteous ends.

There is no solvent of bigotry which can equal

partnership in moral service ; there is no reconciling influence so potent as community in sacrifice ; and these are within our reach still. Christian History is a cemetery of buried controversies, a museum of extinct, or obsolete, or abandoned doctrines, a register of abortive claims ; but in the article of moral effort, of social service, there is continuous life. The centuries are linked in one great "*day of the Lord*," filled with the strife in which the Crucified is protagonist and every disciple is a combatant. To fall out of this unity of moral endeavour is disaster indeed. For the Church and the denomination, as for the individual Christian, is the oracle of warning. "*Salt is good, but if even the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned ? It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill : men cast it out.*"

So the voice of the sacred past cries a twofold message of warning and of encouragement. It tells of the stumbling-blocks which the pride and the short-sightedness and the corruptions of Christians have heaped in the way of Christ's purpose, and it warns us to vigilantly guard ourselves against similar scandals. But this is not all its witness. It tells us also how the Divine Force within Christianity has always prevailed—not, indeed, commonly, as men's expectations suggested, not often as their preferences desired, but manifestly and completely none the less—over the obstacles of human folly and sin. The interpretation of Christian history demands in the student that intuitive faculty which divines the inner meaning of events, and which the theologian calls faith. The words in which S. Paul described his

own stormy career are found to be true of the long paradox of the Church's life. "*We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves : we are pressed on every side, yet not straitened ; perplexed yet not unto despair ; pursued yet not forsaken ; smitten down yet not destroyed ; always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in the body.*" For the life of the Church, not less than the life of the disciple, is an inspired life, the source, the sustenance, the direction of which are divine ; the gift and work of Him whose Pentecostal advent we hail to-day ; the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost.

S. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

Preached at the Dedication Festival of S. Edward's Church in Romford, on the Translation of S. Edward the Confessor, October 13th, 1889.

“The memory of the just is blessed.”—PROVERBS x. 7.

DIVINE revelation and modern science are agreed in declaring the unity of the human family. The great mysterious fact that men are verily members one of another, and that no experience of the individual is altogether unimportant to the race, is as much a conclusion of science as a postulate of religion.

It has, perhaps, not quite succeeded in vindicating its position as an influence on conduct, and, indeed, it may fairly be questioned whether the essential unity of the human family is not too vague and vast a conception to find admittance into the number of ideas and beliefs which actually affect and direct individual action. It is rather a reflection of abstract philosophy than a motive of conduct. Undoubtedly the general tendency of men is to become dangerously individualist; the temper which we English folks are said to possess so strongly, and which is conveniently styled our insularity, is

only a special development of this tendency to recede from the great truth of human solidarity. Nor can we conceal from ourselves that this tendency—in spite of the occasional picturesqueness of its manifestations—is in the main evil; it induces ignorance, the fertile parent of prejudice, itself in turn the root of enmities and jealousies. It cannot, therefore, be other than very desirable that the effort should be made to bring together into some sort of habitual contact these truths of human solidarity and ordinary human conduct. The Church of Christ does make this effort from its own point of view, and not without effect both on the individual and on society. The limitations of time and place and nation, which crystallize individualism into epochs, localities, and races, find no recognition within the Catholic Church. The Church includes within her borders as well all the ages as all the races of human history. The unity of history is not only a conclusion of modern historical science, it is also a postulate of Catholicism. The religious life of the individual Christian attains breadth and dignity from the realization of the solidarity of Catholic history. To neglect the past, still more to deride it, is a sure evidence of shrivelled and ignorant discipleship, a condition the most favourable in the world of every form of error and prejudice. Everything that can bring into more living contact the past and the present will assuredly be for the benefit of the latter, if for no other reason than for this, that thereby the present will be taught modesty, for it will learn the truth of the preacher's observa-

tion, that human experience evermore repeats itself. *That which is hath been already: and that which is to be hath already been; and God seeketh again that which is passed away.* But there is a higher and less cynical reason than this. The past is rich in records of brave deeds and high endeavours, the page of its history contains noble names of heroes and saints who are our spiritual ancestors, whose toils secured to us many and great franchises, whose examples are our heritage and may be our inspiration, whose sympathy we have a right to claim now, and whose companionship we may hope to attain to hereafter.

The battle-roll of the Saints is a long one, and to tell it over is a worthy task, from which the conclusion can scarcely be other than that to which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews arrived when he so concluded his record of the Old Testament heroes of the faith. "*Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*" We Catholics are no spiritual *parvenus*; we come of a noble stock, and our family record is illumined by countless illustrious names. The knowledge of this fact ought to bring us some accession of moral strength in the rough contests of our lives.

These general observations appeared to me not altogether out of place on this occasion, as leading us towards the proper subject of our reflections to-day, when you are celebrating your patron's

festival. I propose to consider briefly the character of S. Edward in order that we may perhaps find special reason in reference to him, to "bless God's holy name for all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear."

Edward the Confessor holds a great place in English History. His position in the Calendar marks his ecclesiastical prominence, but in secular history his name is no less distinguished. The reasons of this importance are very largely to be sought for in circumstances unconnected with the saint's personal character. The time in which he was called to sit on the throne of his ancestors was a time of critical importance. It was the transition period which over all Europe preceded the definite establishment of that system of society and government which we are accustomed to call by the somewhat dark and doubtful term, feudal. It may escape the notice of those who are not familiar with the history of Western civilization that this feudal system, to use again a convenient though inexact phrase, was as much ecclesiastical as secular, and modelled the Church not less powerfully than the State on its principles. In English History undoubtedly there have worked special influences, to which must be ascribed not only the ancestral liberty of which Englishmen are accustomed, and with excellent reason, to be proud, but also the ecclesiastical individualism which, if not so unmixed a blessing (and individualism, I apprehend, never can be an unmixed blessing), yet is assuredly a force for good in English life and thought. It would be

out of place in a discourse of this character to enter even briefly on a consideration of those special influences; let it suffice to point out that they have worked from the earliest times, and are working still.

Edward the Confessor, I said, came to the throne in critical times. Turn your thoughts for a few moments back to the England of the first half of the eleventh century, and see how true my words are. The great Danish wars of the tenth century had been followed by the brief repose of Cnut's reign, and then with his death the troublous days had come back, and the country was again distracted by contending claimants for the throne. For seven years this had gone on, until the death of Harthacnut, as he drank himself drunk at a bridal feast; then, mainly through the influence of the famous Godwine, most eloquent and most valiant of English nobles, the line of the old English kings was restored in the person of Edward the Confessor. He came to a distracted kingdom, poverty-stricken by a long course of civil strife, degraded by a succession of foreign rulers. So far I have been speaking of the secular State. If you turn to the Church the aspect of affairs was even more deplorable. There can be no question that the clergy of England at this time were the most ignorant and worldly in Europe. At an earlier period they had been in the forefront of the Church, and the monastic schools of England had been the universities of the West; but all this had been changed during the disastrous Danish wars. It

must be remembered that the Danes directed their fiercest attacks against the churches and monasteries, as well because those institutions contained most of the wealth of the country as because the invaders were Pagans of a singularly ferocious type. With the churches and monasteries, schools and libraries, the sustenance and nurseries of learning perished. The state of the Church of England was then deplorable, and if reformation was to be effected it must come from outside, since from within it was no longer possible to hope that recuperative energy could be found.

Now the previous history of this monarch, your patron saint, had brought him into close contact with the foreign Church; especially with that Church of Normandy, which was destined to play so distinguished a part in that great Reformation which is associated with the name of the Archdeacon Hildebrand, afterwards Pope Gregory VII. I may remind you that S. Edward was the son of Æthelred, surnamed the Redeless, or lacking Counsel, and brother of that heroic prince Eadmund, surnamed Ironside. His mother was the Norman lady Emma. He had shared his father's temporary exile in Normandy, and after the death of his brother had passed most of his time in that country. There he had become conscious of the vanity of worldly ambition; the fascination of that wonderful mediæval spirit of monasticism, which some persons seem to think, strangely enough, may be conjured back into existence in our own faithless and sordid days, had seized hold of him, and he was a monk long before

he was a king. This is the explanation of that un-English partiality for foreigners, which in his own day and since has done so much to injure his good name amongst patriots. I am not attempting to defend him in this matter, but I would point out that the condition of the Church of England was such that no change for the better could reasonably be expected except from without; and that, as a matter of fact, most excellent results followed as well to the nation as to the Church of England from that subordination to foreign influences which Edward the Confessor certainly hastened and encouraged, if he did not originate. Ecclesiastical independence in the eleventh century meant nothing less than ecclesiastical anarchy, and ecclesiastical anarchy, all the world over, means spiritual and moral decay. If proof were needed of the assertion, it may be found in the history of the Church of Ireland.

Edward the Confessor is to the monarchy of England what S. Louis was to the monarchy of France: he was the royal saint, and his sanctity hallowed the throne for all time. Ever since it is the figure of S. Edward which is forced on the notice of the new monarch by the significant ceremonies of his coronation. In S. Edward's chair he is seated as king, S. Edward's crown is placed upon his brows; S. Edward's franchises are promised to the clergy. Now at first sight this seems a little surprising. There have been greater kings, there have been greater men than he in the annals of England, and yet none seems so permanently to

have impressed the national imagination. Undoubtedly, as I said before, the critical character of the age in which he lived goes far to explain this ; but still there must have been qualities in the monkish king which justified the homage of the nation through so many ages. Lappenberg, a writer by no means prejudiced in his favour, yet admits that he "desired only the happiness and prosperity of his people; and his was the rare justification of having relieved them from all oppressive imposts. His administration of justice is without reproach." The historian no doubt alludes to the abolition of the famous Danegelt, so unpopular and oppressive to the nation at that time. The legend which ascribes the abolition to the fact that S. Edward saw the Devil sitting on the Treasure is not altogether without interest. It seems to reveal in this king that anxious, suspicious temper, so proper in the Christian when directed towards the gains and the dignities of the world, and that unflinching self-sacrifice which when the course of duty is clear will not shrink from walking therein at whatever cost. A tender-hearted, pious king in those rough, rude days might well associate the author of Evil with the proceeds of Taxation. The legend is a mediæval method of declaring that S. Edward made his ordinary duty matter of conscience, and applied his religion to the commonplace details of daily life.

The old English chronicle, when it comes to record the death of the saintly king, cannot continue to speak the sober language of prose, but breaks out

into verse. He died when the glorious church, which was known as the West Minster, was just dedicated to the glory of God, and of the Holy Apostle S. Peter. The hallowing was on Childermass Day, December 28th, 1065; the king died on Twelfth Day Eve, January 5th, 1066, at the beginning of that fateful year which before its close would witness the battle of Senlac, and the establishment of the Normans in England. The unknown historian, who records S. Edward's death, has testified in simple verse the deep affection and respect which was borne towards him by the people over whom he had reigned.

“ This year king Edward, of Angles, Lord,
Sent his truthful soul to Christ,
Into God's protection. A holy spirit.

* * * * *

A king in virtues good, chaste, and mild ;
Edward the noble his country guarded,
His land and people, until came suddenly
The bitter death, and so dearly took
The noble king from earth.”

The English had good reason for thinking with regretful love on the just and merciful king when the iron yoke of the Norman crushed them to the earth. His government seemed to them in their misery the ideal system, and when as time passed they gathered themselves together against their oppressors, compelling them to give audience to their demands, they asked simply for the restoration of the laws of Edward, not meaning thereby any special enactments which they desired to have

again put into force, for it is very doubtful whether the good king was to any considerable extent an original legislator, but rather indicating that mild and merciful administration of government which they had been wont to enjoy under the last king of the Old-English Dynasty.

"The memory of the Just is Blessed."

I have shown how notoriously this was the case with your glorious patron, S. Edward; how his revered figure seemed to watch over the people and secure to them benefits and blessings long after his death. It is so, my brethren, not less truly with all those who lead the high and holy life on earth, wherever they are placed in society, whenever they are called to bear their witness. S. Edward had to serve God on a throne; he bare his witness in the most distinguished position which human ambition can crave for. You and I have to serve God in more lowly spheres of action; we are not set on high as a sign and a beacon to all men, but in the comparative obscurity of private life must bear our witness before the world. Let us not suppose that because we are insignificant we are therefore exempt from the obligation of duty. Let us not suppose that the Sacred Record of heaven, which contains the life-story of the sons of men, is constructed on the model of the histories of earth, and only deigns to note the deeds of the famous and the great. Verily, my brethren, fame and power and majesty, rank and importance and

degree—these all are but the tattle of earth, and have no counterpart in heaven. They belong to the transitory arrangements of time, not to the eternal laws of God. We who believe in God, and walk in the narrow way which Jesus Christ traced for us, must pass through the life of earth as Moses passed through the temptation of the Egyptian Court, of whom it is on record that “*he endured as seeing Him, Who is invisible.*” The times in which S. Edward lived were strangely different from these in which you and I are living. It requires an exertion of historic imagination to recover that eleventh century into reality even for a moment. Manners, language, government—all were different. One thing was the same then as now—the Truth of God, of human duty, of Satanic Temptation, of Divine Grace. The Church of God gathers into real unity the eleventh century and the nineteenth, of both proclaiming this supreme verity, that *this is the victory that overcometh the world, even Faith.* The Battle of the Lord, in which S. Edward fought so bravely, still proceeds, and still, as in the first age, *the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; still, as then, our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places;* and now, not less than then, those only can hope for victory who have followed the admonition of the apostle, and *put on the whole armour of God.* Still, my brethren, the fortunes of the day are doubtful, and the Militant Church in the stress of

the conflict cannot tell which way victory inclines.
Divers is the fate of the warriors of Christ.

Some in the tumult are lost,
Baffled, bewilder'd, they stray ;
Some, as prisoners, draw breath ;
Some, unconquered, are cross'd
(Not yet half through the day)
By a pitiless arrow of Death.

Hardly, hardly shall one
Come with countenance bright,
At the close of the day, from the plain,
His Master's errand well done,
Safe through the smoke of the fight,
Back to his Master again.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY,

AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE CAREER
OF ARCHBISHOP THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

Address given in S. Mary's Hospital on December 29th, 1896.

THE career of Archbishop Thomas, whose memory this ancient Hospital is charged to perpetuate,* was passed in an age strangely unlike our own, and yet an age which is linked to ours by important and manifest links. If to-night, in addressing you on the occasion of this Festival (which we celebrate rather by way of an historical commemoration than by the specific authority of ecclesiastical law), I seem to leave on one side the stirring narrative of the Prelate's conflicts and martyrdom, you must grant me your indulgence, since I have in view a purpose—useful I hope, necessary I think at the present time—which, however, does not permit me to trace the history in detail. I desire to speak to you briefly about the Church in the twelfth century, of which our patron was so conspicuous a champion, and by the fortune of his death so potent an advocate. Comparisons

* The Hospital at Ilford, originally dedicated to S. Mary, was re-dedicated, fifty years after its foundation (*i.e.* in 1191), to S. Thomas of Canterbury, by his sister Mary Becket, at that time Abbess of Barking.

between the Church of our own day and the Church of former times are very frequently made, and not always, as it seems to me, very fairly or very wisely. The characteristic faults of our own time are dwelt upon, and we are bidden to admire a century in which assuredly *those* faults were not apparent ; but we are not bidden to remember that there were *other* faults not less considerable, perhaps greatly more so, than those against which we now chafe, which in that century troubled good men, and caused them to look back to the days of their fathers for the "golden age." Roman Catholic preachers are much given to these misleading comparisons. They point the finger of scorn at the religious distractions of our time, and then they raise the picture of the mediæval Church, so united, so enthusiastic, so devoted, when all Christians owned the supremacy of the Pope ; and the suggestion always is, go back to the Pope's supremacy, and you shall get again that glorious harmony of the "ages of Faith." We sometimes hear men who are worried with business and burdened with cares speak in terms of regretful comparison of their schoolboy days, when they had no worries or cares, but were "happy as the day is long." What would be thought of the practical wisdom of the counsellor who should advise the dejected man in some such terms as these : "Ah ! that light-hearted joy, that peace of mind, that eager pursuit of objects which once were yours ; you have lost them, because in your waywardness you left school, where you were properly looked after, and never required to think for yourself. Go back to school, my good man, and

all will again be well. It is this miserable independence of yours that weights your manhood with the burden of responsibility, and darkens it with the cloud of care."? You would reject such counsel as absurd—not less absurd is their counsel who bid you seek the remedy for modern difficulties in mediæval arrangements.

The twelfth century is the golden age of the Papacy; never before and never afterwards did it so successfully commend itself to the conscience of Christendom. The Popes themselves throughout the century were men of high character and virtuous lives. They were marvellously successful in their policy, and the close of the century saw the Throne of the Apostolic Church of Rome occupied by the greatest and most powerful of all the Pontiffs, Innocent III. You will perceive that in selecting the twelfth century for our inquiry we are giving every advantage to the Papists.

A glance at a map of mediæval Europe will at once reveal a remarkable dissimilarity between the political divisions of the twelfth century and those of the nineteenth. The Eastern Empire was still a real power, though sadly pressed by the advancing tide of Mohammedanism. Constantinople was the political centre of a dominion which included the southern half of the Balkan peninsula, and the eastern part of Asia Minor. It retained a shadowy authority over the southern shore of the Black Sea. Religiously, however, Constantinople wielded a far wider dominion. The numerous Christians who groaned under the Moslem yoke were still, for the

most part, the spiritual subjects of the Patriarch; the independent kingdoms of Servia and Bulgaria, and the half-barbarian power of Russia, were in his communion. We should always remember that the Catholic Church, which owned the supremacy of the Popes, was only half—the western Latin-speaking half—of the Roman Empire, together with the Barbarian tribes, which had been converted to Christianity. It was the assumption of the Popes that the headship of the whole Church belonged to them by Divine Right; but the older and more cultured Church of the East uniformly rejected that assumption. While thus the Balkan peninsula and Russia lay outside the limits of the Roman obedience on the one side of Europe, on the other, half Spain and Portugal was Mohammedan. The Pomeranians and Prussians, bordering on the Baltic, were still heathen. The three principal powers of Christendom were the Holy Roman Empire; the Kingdom of England, with its continental dominions; and the Kingdom of France. Of these the Holy Roman Empire was at once the most august and the most extensive. It included the whole of central Europe and Italy, as far south as Rome, and it claimed a hazy supremacy over all Christendom. You will remember that the Western Empire, which had been extinct since the abdication of Augustulus in 476, had been revived in 800 in the person of the German king Charles, known to romance and tradition as Charlemagne, and certainly one of the most remarkable men of all history. The principal agent in this restoration of the empire had been

the Pope of Rome, Leo III., and the character of the imperial dignity received thus a specially sacred aspect. "We have," says the Pope, in a document drawn up on the day of the coronation, "consecrated him to-day to the office of Augustus for the defence and exaltation of the universal Church." * Charles understood his position thoroughly, and governed Church and State with masterful wisdom throughout his reign. In the troubled times that followed his death the imperial dignity lost much of its importance, but retaining its sacred character and the tradition of the great emperor it possessed an inherent strength which enabled it to render the highest service to the Christian world. The tenth century witnessed the debasement of the Papacy to a degree without parallel before or since. Partly it resulted from the fearful disorganization of society, caused by the invasions of the Northmen, the Hungarians, and the Saracens.

"The anarchy of Italy led to the degradation of the Papacy, the degradation of the Papacy increased the anarchy of Italy. So insignificant is the Pope become, that it is almost as difficult to trace now for a long period, as afterward at the close of the century, the regular succession. The Pope steals unnoticed into his dignity, and departs from it as unregarded; or rather, is suddenly thrust into the throne by some act of violence, and as suddenly dispossessed by means as violent." †

From this slough of degradation the Papacy was

* VON DÖLLINGER, *Historical Essays*, p. 126.

† MILMAN, *Hist. of Latin Christianity*, vol. iii. p. 282.

raised by the action of the German emperors. In 961 Otho the Great was anointed as Emperor at Rome by Pope John XII., and inaugurated a succession of powerful princes, who reformed the degraded Papacy with a strong hand. Yet the disorders continued in spite of intervention for many years, and were only terminated when the emperors adopted the policy of appointing trustworthy German prelates in place of the depraved Roman clergy. In 1046 the first of a series of German Popes ascended the throne, as Clement II. The reformed Papacy did not long acquiesce in the supremacy of its benefactors. Over all Europe in the eleventh century a wave of religious enthusiasm was passing, and it ran in a hierarchic channel. A loftier tone was adopted by the Roman Pontiffs: they ceased to regard the emperors with that lowly submission which at first marked their attitude. The hierarchic enthusiasm of the time found its ablest and most ardent exponent in the famous Hildebrand, who in 1073 ascended the throne as Pope Gregory VII. "One predominating idea inspired him," observes Neander, "and to this he sacrificed all other interests: the idea of the independence of the Church, and of the control to be exercised by her over all other human relations; the idea of a religious moral dominion over the world to be administered by the Papacy. This was not, indeed, the purely Christian idea of dominion over the world, but a recasting of it under an Old Testament form altogether foreign to Christianity; and that, too, not without some mixture of the idea

of Rome's ancient imperial sovereignty."* Now this idea of a visible kingdom of Christ, ruling by Divine Authority and bringing under the dominion of righteousness all the powers of the world, was not only very noble and attractive in itself—in the existing state of opinion it seemed reasonable and expedient. The best men of the time were carried away by it, and from Gregory VII. to Innocent III., that is, throughout the twelfth century, the Popes were supported by the general conscience of the Church. Yet the short sketch I have given will indicate to you that the opposition roused against the Papal policy of universal moral empire would be both powerful and persistent. Not only would the forces of tyranny and vice be naturally ranged against the enforcement of righteousness, but also legitimate interests of nationality, of political order, of local independence, of spirituality, would resist the despotic authority of the Pontiffs, and the German emperors would obviously be the first to resist the Papal claims. The conflict in which Archbishop Thomas lost his life cannot be understood except as part of a general conflict, proceeding throughout Christendom, between the ideal of moral empire, administered by the Popes, and the practical necessities of government. The Papacy began that conflict under great disadvantages, but with the support of the Christian conscience. After nearly two centuries of conflict it emerged victorious; but it had lost, and lost for ever, the support of the Christian conscience.

* NEANDER, *General Church History*, vol. vii. p. 111. [Clark's Foreign Theol. Library.]

Turning now to the actual career of our patron, you will notice how it illustrates the solidarity of the Western Church. The immediate causes of the dispute are purely local, but they raise the issue of principle, and once carried into that sphere become the public interest of Christendom. The fugitive archbishop finds allies and apologists everywhere; his quarrel is espoused by the reigning Pontiff, Alexander III., and Henry II. discovers himself to be in controversy no longer with a refractory subject, but also with the whole hierarchy of Christendom. The actual causes, as we read them now, seem very inadequate. S. Thomas was, as it seems to us, the advocate of clerical privileges always perilous, and generally mischievous. We wonder how he has succeeded in drawing to himself the homage of centuries; we inquire in what sense we can sympathize with his conflict, and be thankful for his triumph. Surely the explanation must be sought in the actual barbarism of that age. Henry II. was in many respects a great king, and his conception of government was no unworthy one. Here is a summary of a great living historian:* "He was faithful to the letter of his engagements . . . he restored internal peace, and with it plenty, as the riches of England in the following reign amply testify. He arranged the administration of justice by enacting good laws and appointing faithful judges. He restored the currency, he encouraged commerce, he maintained the privileges of the towns, and

* The Bishop of Oxford.

without encouraging an aggressive spirit armed his people for self-defence. He sustained the form and somewhat of the spirit of the national representation. The clergy had grounds of complaint against him for very important reasons, but their chief complaints were caused by their preference of the immunities of their class to the common safeguard of justice." This is high praise, and we are left by it in considerable perplexity how to adjudge between king and archbishop. We can see where the weakness of Henry's position lay when we study his turbulent but commanding personality. "When we find that in this cause (of clerical privilege for which S. Thomas died) all the piety and wisdom of three centuries saw the championship of divine truth and justice against secular usurpation, we are not surely wrong in supposing that the constitutions of Clarendon were dated three centuries too soon."

In himself Henry II. continued a barbarian. After the archbishop's flight he could not restrain his fury. "He passed a sentence of banishment, and ordered at once to be driven from the kingdom all the Primate's kinsmen, dependents, and friends. Four hundred persons, it is said, of both sexes, of every age, even infants at the breast were included (and it was the depth of winter) in this relentless edict." Could the author of such an atrocity be safely trusted with the unlimited authority he claimed? He sometimes gave way to paroxysms of passion so violent as to suggest insanity. "He burst into a fit of passion, threw away his cap, ungirt his belt, stripped off his clothes, tore the silken coverlet from

his bed, and crouched down on the straw, gnawing bits of it with his teeth." Could that furious maniac reasonably claim the confidence of the clergy? He is said to have tortured with his own hands a hapless lad who was captured with letters of the archbishop in his possession. In all this, doubtless, the king could find many parallels in that age of violence. This is precisely where the justification of the clergy must be found. The State was not sufficiently civilized to merit that authority which now it rightly claims. Remember the liberties of the clergy extended to a very large number of people, and they the most helpless against feudal violence. So I demur to Dean Milman's judgment that "Becket was, indeed, the martyr of the clergy, not of the Church; of sacerdotal power, not of Christianity; of a caste, not of mankind"; not as being untrue, so much as being merely superficial. Bishop Stubbs speaks with more insight and with greater justice when he points out "that the privileges of the Church in the Norman era should be considered as the franchises of the people: it was through the clergy only that the voice of the people could be heard." So long as the Church represented juster principles of government than the State, so long would her supremacy rest on a moral basis, and command the support of the general conscience; but when once this ceased to be the case then that basis would crumble, that support be withdrawn, and the days of that supremacy be numbered.

The Papacy in the twelfth century fulfilled a most valuable educational function. It exercised stern

dominion over the rude races of Europe, and trained them by necessary discipline for the independent careers which lay before them. This temporary and contingent value of the Papal supremacy may be perceived by the palpable inadequacy of the Papacy for the task of a permanent dominion. The Popes were plainly unable to live up to their own theory. Human nature is not competent for so sublime a rôle. Neander's remarks on Gregory's doctrine are not less profound than true.

"He who allows the zeal for such an idea to usurp the place of a zeal for truth and justice will soon have formed within himself a *particular conscience* also which may sanction many things, tending to the advantage of his party bent, that a true conscience and the divine law would condemn. He who believes himself the vicegerent of the divine will in the government of mankind will easily be misled to set up *his own will* in place of the divine, and then think himself entitled to take many liberties for the realization of that divine will." * The history of the Papacy even in that golden age, the twelfth century, abundantly illustrates these words. The Popes even then, when the reforming enthusiasm to which they owed their lofty position was bearing all before it, were perceptibly unable to justify their sacred pretensions. There was a Papal Schism in progress. Christendom was divided between two contending Popes. Henry II. and Louis VII. supported Pope Alexander; the great

* *General Church History*, vol. vii. p. 113.

Emperor Frederick Barbarossa supported his rival, Victor IV. The unity of the Church, about which Roman Catholics speak so movingly, was a very precarious and intermittent thing in the "ages of Faith." The distress of consciences must have been cruel when the conflicting Pontiffs were hurling their anathemas at one another, and no one was free from some fatal guilt in the judgment of half Christendom.* We learn that a certain abbot applied to the famous Abbess Hildegard to inform him what he ought to do during the schism. "She advised him to say in his heart to God, 'Lord, Thou, who knowest all things in my superiors, I will obey them, so long as they oblige me to do nothing contrary to the Catholic Faith.'"† One result of this melancholy schism was to destroy the Pope's liberty of action. Alexander III. believed and declared that Archbishop Thomas was entirely right, but he suffered the poor man to beat his heart out in exile for six years, because he dared not take a strong line against King Henry, who was always hinting that he might join the side of the rival pope. The Divine Vicegerent cuts rather a poor figure when he thus trims his sail to the wind. There is no doubt that the murder of the archbishop relieved the Pope from an extremely difficult position. Moreover, the more successful the Popes

* The higher the Papal authority is reckoned, the graver is the spiritual significance of these Papal schisms. Historically the Papacy has rather ministered to fatal religious division than to that external unity of which it is *now* said to be the symbol and pledge.

† NEANDER, vii. p. 293.

were in drawing to themselves the homage of Christendom, the more they multiplied the opportunities of corruption. With the best of intentions, they could not escape from the infirmities of human nature. As the business of all the Churches began to centre in Rome, inevitably a great official system for dealing with it grew up. The Pope himself might be upright and clean-handed, and in the twelfth century generally was, but what should secure the same qualities in his officials? As an actual fact, even then the Roman Court was scandalous; in the subsequent ages it became the by-word of Christendom for its corruption. S. Thomas himself uses language of the most vehement denunciation about the Papal Court. "I know not how it is that in the Court of Rome the Lord's side is always sacrificed, that Barabbas escapes and Christ is slain. By the authority of the Court our exile and the calamity of the Church has been prolonged to the end of the sixth year. With you the wretched, the exiles, the innocent are condemned, and for no other reason (on my conscience I say it) than because they are the poor of Christ, and weak, and would not go back from the righteousness of God, while on the other hand you absolve the sacrilegious, the murderers, the robbers, the impenitent, whom I openly declare, on the authority of Christ, that not Peter himself, did he rule the Church, could absolve in the sight of God. . . . Is it not our spoils, or rather the spoils of the Church, which the king's emissaries lavish on and pay to the cardinals and courtiers? . . . For my own part I am resolved no longer to trouble the Court; let those resort thither

who prevail in their iniquities.”* Clearly the Divine Tribunal was not working very satisfactorily; our patron’s language would serve very well for a Protestant diatribe against Rome.

I had intended to speak of the evidence which the life of S. Thomas provides of the fictitiousness of the much-vaunted ecclesiastical liberty of the time. We sometimes hear men speak scornfully of the hollowness (which is, indeed, painful enough) of the various forms of pretended election, etc., by which the nominee of the State is now appointed to his bishopric. Certainly the hollowness was scarcely less manifest in the twelfth century. Henry II. nominated the bishops with as much authority, though with less parade of authority, than Henry VIII. The Papacy was supposed to have secured the right of free election to the chapters; but the right was as nominal as it is now, whenever the king cared to assert himself.

We may conclude, then, that the supremacy of the Popes was morally valuable so long as it commended itself to the general conscience as making for righteousness; that, on the whole, during the twelfth century it did so commend itself; but that, even at that time, there were very evident signs of its inability to fulfil the great task it had claimed for itself. Incidentally, I think, we have learned the futility of those comparisons between our own time and earlier

* *v. S. Thomas’ letter to Cardinal Albert. (Materials for History of Archbishop Becket, vol. vii. p. 279, Rolls Series.)* There is a good bit of such language in the Archbishop’s correspondence towards the end of his exile.

ages, greatly to the disadvantage of our own time ; we have seen that when the past is carefully examined it is found to have its full complement of problems and difficulties. I think also that we must have perceived how fatuous is the suggestion that the system of Papal dominion, which was possible and even serviceable in a simple and semi-savage society, could be either possible or serviceable now. The England of the twelfth century probably contained throughout its entire expanse little more than one-third of the population of London and its suburbs. The whole population of Western Christendom, as it was regarded by the mediæval Catholic, probably contained a smaller population than that of the British Islands. The ignorance of the age almost exceeds belief. The clergy were the monopolists of learning, and even they were often marvellously ignorant. It was, however, the ignorance of vigorous childhood, not the brutal vacancy of mere savagery ; and in that vigorous childhood of Europe the Church played the part of a mighty mother, teaching, indulging, punishing, rewarding her children. That service was incalculably great, but its successful performance involved the cessation of the Church's dominion. To propose the restoration of the mediæval system is to propose to a thoughtful and educated man a return to the nursery. Just as a mother performs for her child numerous services which in due time he will perform for himself, so the Church performed for the infant civilization of Europe a variety of services which now that developed civilization can provide and will provide for itself. In the twelfth century the Church

was teacher, doctor, lawyer, politician, schoolmaster, musician, sanitary officer, literary man, theatrical manager; there is no branch of activity which she did not undertake and regulate; but her perpetual task is not in these, it lies not in the sphere of civilization, but in the higher sphere of spiritual witness. Her dominion has ceased, and it is vain to speak of reviving it; but her authority remains, her everlasting mission continues; for her Authority is that of the World's Redeemer, and her mission is His. Still, wherever she proclaims the Gospel and offers the means of grace, and gives to the distressed the consolations of Christ, she commands the homage of men's consciences and the ardent devotion of their hearts.

PART II.

SOCIAL

THE WORK OF CHRIST

*Preached in the Chapel of Lincoln's Inn on the Fourth
Sunday after the Epiphany, January 31st, 1897.*

"We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work."—S. JOHN ix. 4.

THESE words were drawn from Jesus Christ by a remarkable question addressed to Him by His disciples. Our Saviour's attention had been arrested by the sad but familiar spectacle of a blind beggar. We may reasonably infer from the evangelist's account that this afflicted man's case was notorious. He was "*blind from his birth.*" Thus he presented to view in its most pathetic, because its least disciplinary shape, the very common, but not on that account more tolerable, phenomenon of physical affliction. (Very often the connection between suffering and culpable misconduct is so manifest and direct that we concede such moral justification for the affliction as mitigates its repulsiveness ; but in the case of a man born blind such mitigation does not exist : the unrelieved horror of human suffering encounters us.) This, then, was the occasion of the following remarkable inquiry on the part of Christ's disciples : "*Rabbi, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born*

blind?"¹ Doubtless the question reflects the prevailing Jewish opinion on the subject of physical suffering. "It was a received doctrine in the Jewish schools that children according to some wickedness of their parents were born lame, or crooked, or maimed, or defective in some of their parts, by which they kept parents in awe lest they should grow remiss and negligent in the performance of some rites which had respect to their being clean, such as washings and purifyings." Possibly there may be a reference to the theory of transmigration of souls, which Josephus declares to have been held by the Pharisees, though with respect to good souls only—a limitation which seems to destroy its relevancy here, where the transmission of guilt is in question. Nor does the Rabbinic notion of a repository, in which at the creation "all the souls that ever were to be born were formed together and placed," seem admissible in the present connection, since it cannot be supposed without blasphemy that, in Dr. John Lightfoot's words, "some souls came immediately from the hand of God, stained and defiled." According to the great authority just named, the question of the disciples may best be explained by Rabbi Akiba's doctrine, "that in the days of the Messiah there shall be neither merit nor demerit," and he paraphrases the text of S. John in this way :—

"Master, we know that Thou art the Messiah, and that these are the days of the Messiah: we have also learnt from our schools that there is no imputation of merit or demerit from the parents

in the days of the Messiah, whence then is it that this man is born blind?—that in these days of the Messiah he should bring into the world with him some mark and imputation of fault or blame somewhere? What, was it his parents' fault? This seems against the received opinion. It seems therefore that he bears some tokens of his own fault—Is it so, or no?"*

We may doubt, I think, whether the disciples were at that time so convinced of Christ's Messianic character, and probably it were safest to suppose that their question expressed nothing more than that eager curiosity with which the vulgar at all times contemplate human suffering, and their readiness to assume that it is retributive. Our Saviour's reply is deeply significant. He sweeps aside the cruel suggestions of His questioners. '*Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents*'; and He points to the moral serviceableness of the affliction which He leaves unexplained, '*but that the works of God should be made manifest in Him.*' Then in the text He draws the inference of practical duty. Whatever mystery might attach to the origin of the man's calamity, none whatever attached to Christ's obligation with respect to it. "*We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. When I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*" And forthwith He gave sight to the blind man.

* v. J. LIGHTFOOT, *Works*, vol. xii. pp. 324 327. [London, 1823.]

You observe, brethren, that while Christ condemns the retributive assumption of His disciples, He does not deny the connection between physical suffering and moral evil. On other occasions He insisted on that connection, nor is it excessive to say that it was the assumption of His ministry. When He addressed to the paralysed man the memorable words which so offended the scribes, *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven*, He clearly assumed a connection between the man's present suffering and his past sin. The Author of Evil, Satan, is spoken of as also the author of physical affliction. So our Lord's indignant rebuke to the ruler of the synagogue, whose Sabbatic propriety was shocked by the healing on the Sabbath day of a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up. . . . Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the Sabbath? But Christ steadily discouraged the tendency to read into sudden calamity the awful sense of a special divine judgment on sin. He did this even while He presented such calamity as a true symbol of the ultimate punishment of wrong.

"Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them; think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye

shall all likewise perish." Our physical distresses often are the direct outcome of our foolish or vicious conduct, but as often, perhaps more often, they have a more distant origin. None can question the literal truth within the physical sphere of the ancient declaration: the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children unto the third and the fourth generation. The unity of the race is a terribly real thing. The mischief of the world's sin empisons and embitters the whole chalice of life, and works disaster over the whole area of human activity. Christianity attempts to explain the mystery of suffering by the doctrine of the fall. I know no better explanation, even while I sadly own the grave difficulties of this. Christ's mission was designed to recover the race from its servitude to sin, and to suffering as a consequence of sin. S. John summarizes that mission in words which may serve as a key to the episode we have before us. "*To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.*" On the assumption that in the last resort physical suffering must be regarded as the creature of moral evil, all the pain of the world can be classed under the description, "*the works of the devil,*" and Christ encountering that pain, so various, so repulsive, so cruel, so far-reaching, rises to the height of His divine mission as the World's Redeemer, and undertakes the task of healing.

"*We must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day.*"

"*We must work*"—you will doubtless observe that I adopt the reading of the revised version. The

MSS. are wonderfully divided, and many eminent critics have decided in favour of the common reading, "*I must work*"; but I cannot feel any hesitation in following the revisers. Not only is there a distinct superiority of critical evidence for the plural pronoun, but also there is—at least in my poor judgment—a large gain in the sense of the passage. Christ associates His disciples with Himself in his Divine enterprise of mercy. They, too, are commissioned to "*destroy the works of the devil*," and the range of their activity must be co-extensive with their Lord's. Physical suffering, and all that makes for physical suffering — unjust conditions of living, insanitary dwellings, inadequate and misdirected education, harsh and unequal laws, oppressive social conventions—all the perennial springs of human misery and disgrace are within the sphere of that redemptive mission which was Christ's in Palestine nearly two millenniums ago, and is Christ's still, wherever His true disciples are found. Has he not identified Himself with them, clothing them with the authority of His own person: "*He that heareth you heareth Me; He that rejecteth you rejecteth Me*"? "*We must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day.*" The exemplary worth of Christ's conduct follows from this identity of His mission and ours, and the abiding importance of the Gospel but reflects the conviction of men that in the life therein recorded they can learn their own practical obligations.] Here, brethren, is the reason why I have ventured to bring before you Christ's treatment of the man born blind. I apprehend we may learn a lesson, salutary at all times

eminently required at the present time. Never before, I suppose, was human suffering so much in evidence ; never before did it weigh so heavily on the heart of civilized mankind ; never was speculation as to the origin and meaning of physical affliction so eager and so audacious. It is characteristic of the age that such speculations should be advanced rather in the name of science than in that of religion. The effect is the same—in brooding over the problem of pain men seem to grow indifferent to it, or rather, the intensified sense of the cruelties of existence tends to dishearten them for the attempt to mitigate them. We are predisposed to a morbid acquiescence in the inveterate evils of life, and grow averse to the apparently hopeless efforts to assuage them. Therefore we need the summons of the Redeemer, bidding us surcease from the idle exertion of a too-curious fancy in order to fulfil the obvious requirement of practical duty. Whatever may be the true explanation of these afflictions which perplex and distress us, one thing does not admit of doubt : we have it in our power to overcome them and, by overcoming them, to transmute them into blessings and the fruitful parents of blessing. “ *We must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day.*”

Mark, brethren, how Christ lays His consecrating hand on all good work. In this age of intellectual unrest, when men’s standpoints are changing, and the old formulas of faith seem largely untenable in the face of modern developments of thought, it cannot be without value and without comfort to dwell on the character of the Christian discipleship as pre-

eminently a warfare against evil in all its forms, personal, domestic, social, political. In some form or other evil faces us all. We are conscious, even the best of us are conscious, of base yearnings within us, which—if but we give way to them—will sink us in our own eyes, and manifestly strengthen over us the dominion of evil. Discipleship is confessed in that “more fearful war within,” against self-indulgence in every shape. In conquering the evil within us we approve ourselves to be Christians, and so with the burdens and the sorrows of the world—our attitude towards them discovers our attitude towards Jesus Christ. “*Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me*” is the King’s explanation of His gracious welcome to those who could not recognize in His approving words a description of their own lives, and to this orthodoxy of moral effort He adds a promise. “*If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself.*” Be loyal to your conscience, fight the baseness of the world around you, bring help to your fellows in their distress—you will find yourself in line with Jesus Christ. His example will recur to you continually as your true model; His spirit will possess you. His words before Pontius Pilate will in your case also approve themselves to be true: “*To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice.*”

The conclusion which Mill drew from the premiss

of Dualism is the commonplace of Christianity, and the disciple may adopt the philosopher's language: "A virtuous human being assumes . . . the exalted character of a fellow-labourer with the Highest, a fellow-combatant in the great strife, contributing his little, which by the aggregation of many like himself becomes much, towards that progressive ascendancy and ultimately complete triumph of good over evil which history points to. . . ."*

Christ uses the language of urgency. His Divine mission must be fulfilled in the brief space of His "day" of opportunity, or not fulfilled at all. "~~The night cometh when no man can work.~~" We gain a glimpse of our Lord's view of His own career. He, like all His brethren, worked under the hard conditions of risk and uncertainty. His "day" was a short one. The life of Jesus in the world had ended when most human lives may be said to be but beginning. It is, indeed, true that His earthly career is but an episode in His warfare against evil, but it is no less true that it is the supreme episode on which hung the issue of men's redemption. (After the Passion the conditions of Christ's life changed: there was no longer any opportunity for the performance of those works by which—in terms of human experience—the character of the unseen, unknown Father might be discovered to human view. The life of Christ constitutes the revelation of God, and that revelation is adequate and faithful as that life is perfect.) S. John—for by that title I must describe

* v. J. S. MILL, *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 116. [London, 1874.]

the author of the Fourth Gospel—has adopted this view of Christ's earthly career, and arranged his narrative accordingly. In the prologue he propounds it as the key to the history. "*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.*" That task—the declaration of the Divine in terms of the human—is the explanation of Christ's words, of His "*signs*," of His conflicts. He raises against Himself all the interests which are dependent on false views about God. The professional pride of the scribes, the hierarchic pretension of the priests, the rigorous ritualism of the Pharisees, the cynical worldliness of the Sadducees—all these drew together against our Lord as against their mortal adversary. Their instinct was unerring, their apprehensions were well founded. Christ's presentment of the Divine character condemned pride and pretence, and externalism and expediency. Step by step the discovery was made; the breach grew wider with every new teaching; the discrepancy became more manifest with every fresh "*sign*"; the history becomes dramatic, advancing to a culminating crisis. For Christ the crisis is reached when from the Cross He cries His victorious word, "*It is finished*"; for the opponents of Christ the crisis is reached when in answer to the Governor's scornful question, "*Shall I crucify your King?*" the chief priests return the answer of apostasy, "*We have no king but Cæsar.*" The career of our Lord is a sustained witness, a Divine pageant, a detailed exposition, and, for good or ill, it was completed

when the "night" of the Passion closed in on Him. He knew it, and the knowledge shadowed His life with awful gravity. "*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work*"; "*My Father worketh even until now, and I work*"; "*Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto Him that sent Me*"; and in the sublime "prayer of consecration" on the threshold of His agony, "*I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.*" These and many similar words of Christ reveal the intense conviction of purpose which inspired His action. The text may be added: "*We must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.*"

("The night cometh when no man can work." My brethren,) which of us can escape the pathetic truth of Christ's warning? Forget it, indeed, we may in the easy routine of comfortable living, or the absorbing pre-occupation of selfish ambition; drive it from mind we can by the distractions of business, or the dissipations of pleasure, but it returns upon us with ruthless persistence—"The night cometh when no man can work." The sand in the hour-glass of life falls silently, and we are cheated by the silence of its falling into forgetting that it falls unceasingly until the last grain has run out. It is only under the pressure of some compulsion—unwelcome truly, but beneficent—that we mark the fatal process. Some career, intertwined with our own by the close and subtle bonds of relationship, or sympathy, or fellowship in work and hope,

is cut short by "the pitiless arrow of death," or shipwrecked disastrously in mid-course on the sunken rocks of shameful sin, or submerged by the sullen wave of irrecoverable misfortune. The pang of our hearts compels our notice; in the solitude of grief we hear perforce the foreboding witness of our fears. "Such are your perils too; such the possibilities of your career; for you also is the saying, '*The night cometh when no man can work.*'" And in quieter hours, in those pauses of introspection which all, even the lightest, even the busiest, experience, the thought comes threateningly upon us that our life is passing, that, if indeed we are to make any worthy use of the powers and opportunities we possess, we must seriously apply ourselves to some task, and surrender ourselves to the service of some ideal. We reflect that our tenure of our faculties is pitiably frail, our hold on life strangely uncertain. Probably there is not one of us who cannot produce from the archives of memory instances of mental and moral collapse, which afflict us by their pathos or appal us by their shame. "*The night*" has fallen on brilliant powers, and great success, and a noble name, and splendid hopes.

"Names in my ears

Of all the lost adventurers my peers,
How such a one was strong, and such was bold,
And such was fortunate, yet each of old
Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years."

How inexplicable it is—this persistent cruelty of relentless fortunes! Men draw the inferences which

match and reveal their characters: the "saeva indignatio" of the satirist, or the ascetic's "sorrowful way," or the "fool's" coarse atheism, or the sensualist's squalid pleasure. "*Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*" Christ draws another and a nobler conclusion. To Him the problem presented itself under circumstances of aggravated difficulty. He drained the chalice of human baseness, and carried the Cross of uttermost human failure; there is no deep of human sorrow which He has not sounded; and with these credentials of bitter experience He makes His appeal to all who, under whatever circumstances, in whatever measure, yet drink of that chalice and bend beneath that Cross.

"We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

THE CHRISTIAN IN THE WORLD

*Preached on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 4th, 1894,
in Westminster Abbey.*

“Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise,
redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

EPHESIANS v. 15, 16.

THE disciples of Jesus Christ living in the midst of a great Pagan city were exposed to grievous and continuous perils. The moral corruption of the ancient world found there its most complete and deadly expression. It entered into all the relations of life : commerce, politics, society, worst of all, religion, were steeped in it. The very atmosphere of existence was heavy with gross sin. Evil, which in the country diffused itself over a wider area, and was at all times checked and shadowed by the solemn and beautiful scenes of Nature, was here brought together into a centre, and protruded upon the notice without hindrance or intermission. To borrow Cardinal Newman's simile, “It was basking under the sun, and rioting and extending itself to its amplest dimensions, like some glittering serpent, or spotted pard . . . without interposition from

heaven or earth in correction of so awful a degradation." Such a centre and focus of evil was ancient Ephesus. There vice went hand in hand with the grossest superstition; the magic of the Ephesians was proverbial. There Paganism expressed itself in a popular worship, which combined the sensual splendour of the Oriental with the artistic grace of the Greek. The Church had been established there by S. Paul during two years of unremitting labour, amid extraordinary tokens of popular excitement. The exceptional violence of his opponents revealed the exceptional measure of the apostle's success, and we may not doubt that the sharp-witted Ephesians appreciated justly the religious devotion of Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen. The times of open opposition are commonly those of least spiritual danger, and it was not until quieter days succeeded the excitement which drove S. Paul from the city, that the real perils of their position were felt by the Ephesian converts. When the familiar life was resumed amid the familiar surroundings, and they found themselves face to face with all its old attractions, laid hold of by all its old claims, appealed to by all its old motives, then, and not till then, did they realize the gulf which severed the followers of Christ from the devotees of Diana. And as the chill of that great severance passed upon them the temptation was steady and strong to rebel against it, to throw a bridge across the chasm, and attempt the futile yet seductive task of reconciling the service of the Crucified with the enjoyment of the world. That this temptation was not altogether

unsuccessful we may conclude from the passionate earnestness with which S. Paul urges upon his converts the austere claims of discipleship. Our text stands at the end of a series of moral counsels and warnings, of which it is difficult to exaggerate the urgency and solemnity. S. Paul has painted in vivid colours the contrast between the corruptions of society and the holy living of genuine discipleship, he has implored the Ephesians to remember that such holy living is the condition of "*any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God*," he has proved the necessity of carefulness in the religious life, and now he proceeds yet one step further. Carefulness must be directed by wisdom, lest the fears of conscience and the discipline of conduct be wrongly directed, and therefore wasted. "*Take heed therefore how ye walk exactly*," for this is the true sense of the original. The Ephesians are to be wise in their self-discipline, taking heed that the strictness of their walk is directed by right motives to right ends. "*Take heed therefore how ye walk exactly, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time*," or rather, "*buying up the opportunity*," because the days are evil.

S. Paul proposes the method and the reason of that careful walk in the world, without which the Christian will fail to resist the degrading influences which from every side bear down upon him.

"*Buying up the opportunity*." The expression occurs also in the Epistle to the Colossians, and a comparison of the two passages makes it evident that the apostle has primarily in view the relations

which should exist between Christians and those who are not Christians.

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, buying up the opportunity.” S. Chrysostom bases on these words some admirable counsels as to the right method of dealing with unbelievers, counsels which have lost nothing of their truth and little of their value in the passing of fifteen centuries. He warns against giving needless offence to the prejudices of men. “Except the Gospel message give no other handle, on any score whatever, for the hatred which you will incur.” He advises the cultivation of friendship as a method of gaining access to men’s hearts. Intimate acquaintance with character will enable a suitable method of address. “For if a physician dealeth not with all bodies alike, much more ought not a teacher. And yet better will the body bear unsuitable medicines than the soul unsuitable language; for instance, a Greek cometh to thee, and becomes thy friend. Discourse not at all with him on this subject until he has become a close friend, and after he hath become so do it gradually.”

“Buying up the opportunity.” The language is that of commerce. S. Paul proposes, as the type of the wisely-careful Christian, the prudent merchant vigilantly watching the market, prompt to seize the opportunities of advantage when they occur, avoiding the double danger of procrastination and half-heartedness. To procrastinate certainly jeopardizes, probably loses the advantage, which the moment offers; half-measures will be worse than none at all. To negotiate with no serious purpose, to set hand

to tasks the magnitude of which has not been considered, to play with business—this is to be guilty of the unpardonable sin of merchants, frivolity. No, the opportunity must be bought up without delay, and secured, made our own, and used.

We observe, then, that the apostle's counsel assumes vigilance, promptitude, and decision, the tempers which are indispensable in the successful merchant.

My brethren, we are ready enough in the concerns of the secular life to allow the reasonableness of S. Paul's advice. We speak of men's "chances," and we are properly relentless against those who waste their chances. We say of them very rightly that they merit their obscurity, or their failure, or their indigence. It is the severest judgment that we can pass on a statesman that he missed his opportunity because he failed to gauge aright the mind of his generation, and was blind to the signs of the times writ large in the political horizon. History owes its tragedies to such blindness. The world's crises are brought about by it. A living historian has set before us the beginnings of the Reformation. Perhaps the most impressive feature in the record is the astounding example of political blindness which it presents to view. The Papal Court, containing the most experienced and keen-sighted diplomatists of Christendom, was apparently totally unable to understand either the grievance or the character of Martin Luther. We see them absorbed in the eager pursuit of secular objects, and absolutely unconscious of the great German revolt that was

gathering strength beyond the Alps. "The Papal policy towards Luther," is the striking judgment of Bishop Creighton, "was the result of the triumph of officials over statesmen in the Papal Court." A great crisis in the history of the Church had arrived, and the Church's rulers were unconscious, pre-occupied, blind, and deaf. I have sometimes reflected that such failure to recognize crises is the besetting sin of hierarchies. Our Saviour's comment on the Pharisees and Sadducees may not unfitly be applied to the religious leaders of later ages. "*Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven: but ye cannot discern the signs of the times.*"

"*Buying up the opportunity.*" The wisdom of S. Paul's words is sufficiently manifest when we recall the disasters which have had no other cause than the slothful indifference or fatuous apathy of men; but it is not to such illustrations in the past that I desire to lead your thoughts to-day. I have a more practical, a more personal end in view. As Christians we are each one charged with the sublime mission to represent before our fellows the power of the Gospel. The men of the world are authorized to demand of those who call themselves by the name of Christ a true presentation of His religion. It is a very terrible fact, but one from which we may not escape. Christ in the judgment of the world is Christ as we show Him forth. Our conduct gives the measure of His power to order lives. Our devotion gives the measure of His power to evoke love. He is proposed to men under the disadvantages of our scandals, and with the recom-

mendations of our virtues. Christ says not merely to the ordained Christian priesthood, though doubtless in special sense to it, but also to that wider priesthood, of which the ordaining grace is conveyed in the waters of baptism, "*He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth Me.*" We, too, each one have the power of the keys, for by our virtues we draw men to those ever-open gates, and by our scandals we bar their approach with stumbling-blocks. Have you thought of this, my brother? These are days when men are greatly resentful of interference in religion, greatly devoted to religious individualism. There is an unexpressed convention, generally observed in the religious sphere, which permits every man to go his own way without regard to anybody else. It is taken for granted that man is not his brother's keeper, that a man's religion is his own affair, and that he is under no obligation to consider its bearings upon others. My brethren, that assumption is the most disastrous delusion that was ever coined by Satanic craft or accepted by human folly. It is the precise contradiction of the truth; it runs counter both to the constitution of human nature and to the revelation of the Divine will.

"*Ye are the salt of the earth. . . . Ye are the light of the world.*" Such are Christ's declarations to His disciples, and, as if to take away the very possibility of misconception, He adds those words, of which the familiar use has perhaps obscured the tremendous gravity. "*Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*"

"Buying up the opportunity." This is a counsel very necessary, when, having realized the solemn charge which rests upon us as the representatives of Christ, we attempt deliberately and systematically to fulfil it. We go to our several spheres of daily toil with the high purpose in our mind to present by our words and deeds a true version of discipleship to those amid whom we live and more. It is then precisely to us that S. Paul's words are directly addressed.

We—and it is a great thing to be able to say this—have reached the conclusion that discipleship involves the strict and careful walk in the world, that the influence of common conduct—that mysterious but most real power which proceeds forth from each separate individual, and purifies or degrades, uplifts or depresses, hallows or contaminates the society in which he is placed—is something for which account will have to be rendered to God, and we are seriously anxious to bring our lives under the discipline of these solemn and salutary convictions. We shall most assuredly find ourselves encountered by the difficult practical question, How shall this be done? How shall we work into the routine of office, and counter, and workshop this testimony to our Lord? How shall we reconcile the exigent claims of business with the uncompromising demands of discipleship? S. Paul suggests to us if not the answers to these questions, at least the lines along which the answers shall be found. He warns us against obtruding religion directly upon men's notice in season and out of season; that is, to forget the

conditions of life in the world and the infinite sensitiveness of human nature. No doubt such incessant, unremitting testimony is the duty of the Church in relation to the world, and as such it finds appropriate place in the advice which S. Paul himself gives to a Church-ruler ; but that which is the normal task of a S. Timothy is the special service of private disciples, and we shall gravely compromise our witness for Christ if we allow ourselves to disregard the fitness of occasion, the methods of courtesy, and the convenience of time. Who will question the injury to religion which springs from the unreflecting persistence of enthusiasts, whose zeal is out of all proportion to their wisdom, their knowledge, and their charity? The untimely and even offensive exhortations addressed by such persons to fellow-travellers in railway carriages and omnibuses ; the crude, conventional tract produced on every occasion and for every person ; the solemn phrases of spiritual experience forced to do duty in the common intercourse of secular life—will anyone seriously defend such methods of letting the light of discipleship shine upon men? Certainly it will not be disputed that such practices do not largely secure the result contemplated by Christ. Men do not readily glorify our Father which is in heaven when they chafe against our impertinence or stop their ears against our brass bands, or endeavour to escape from our untimely pertinacity.

“Buying up the opportunity.” This is the method of the witness that obtains audience of men’s consciences and wins their hearts. It is the method of

habitual self-discipline, of patient vigilance, of faithful appeal, and it is within the reach of every disciple. Do not doubt that opportunities will come to you. It makes no matter where your place in life may be, this one thing will belong to it, simply because it involves contact with living souls; it will provide opportunities for bearing witness to Jesus Christ. On this matter I can speak with complete confidence, for my words command the assent of every conscience. The difficulty you and I have to reckon with is not lack of opportunity, we have abundance of that: but the carelessness which fails to mark, the indifference which omits to use, the cowardice which fears to seize opportunity—these are difficulties indeed. It is terrible to hear men complain of lack of opportunity, when to the attentive ear the whole complex system of life in every part is crying out appeals for faithful witness. So essentially religious is man, so real is eternity, that close behind the business and pleasure of the world is the question of questions for ever presenting itself at the bar of men's hearts, and demanding answer. That question, brethren, comes into view when it is least expected; it discovers its presence even when the doors are shut, as formerly when the risen Saviour stood in the midst of the Eleven. That brief discussion on a matter of business, which was quite unimportant, a mere suggestion, a half-hinted proposal, did yet raise the issue of honesty; that casual conversation in the train on the way to the city was the merest trifling, yet it meant in the record of heaven and the judgment of conscience treason to purity; that argument

about religion, which was so exciting while it lasted and so soon forgotten, yet did raise the question of loyalty to Jesus Christ. What need to continue? In a thousand ways the opportunity of witness comes to us in the world; in a thousand ways—by look, by gesture, by word, by deed, we strip the cloak off our hearts and make men see the motives which there holds the reins of power. *“Take heed how ye walk strictly, not as unwise, but as wise; buying up the opportunity, because the days are evil.”*

“The days are evil.” In a very real sense this is true of life in the world. The Christian is, and must for ever be, a stranger, a pilgrim, an exile on the earth. *“Our citizenship is in heaven,”* and this world, even at its best, presents itself in ominous competition with the duties of the heavenly state. S. John was not writing for his own age only when he uttered that great cry of warning, which rings through the ages as the protest of the last of the apostles against the worldliness of discipleship in the coming time: *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vain-glory of life is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”*

But each generation has its own particular perils: each life its own incommunicable temptations. The evil of the days must be rightly adjudged if, indeed, it is to be effectually resisted. The strict walk in the world, which is the mark of spiritual wisdom, must be

determined by the special needs of the place and time. My brethren, I venture to think that our own generation has exceptional reasons for remembering this truth. The conditions of life—economical, social, political, intellectual—have changed so rapidly that to an amazing extent men are everywhere facing new problems, new difficulties, new social ills with solutions, expedients, and remedies that were excellent for other times and other needs, but are now obsolete and powerless. Never was there a generation so subject to prejudices, so prone to illusions. Never, therefore, was there so great need of a wise appraisal and estimate of its characteristic evils.

“*The days are evil.*” S. Paul proposes this fact as a reason why we should be vigilant to buy up the opportunities which come within our reach. In the last words of my sermon I would echo the apostle’s language. Let us realize the distinctive evils of our time; analyze and so understand the reasons of the formidable prejudices and prepossessions which at every turn hamper and obstruct the Church’s work among the multitudes of the poor; get to the bottom of this portentous suspicion which, in its anxiety to destroy our influence, threatens even to oppress our consciences; distinguish more accurately between the personal and professional, and the moral and spiritual interests of the Church; conciliate by manifest single-mindedness those who have been long accustomed to associate the claims of conscience with the designs of ambition. Above all, let us remember that the duty of doing this rests on all disciples. There is too much diplomacy and too little democracy in our

spiritual politics. On all hands men declaim against individuals and classes, while they fail to set themselves to the work which belongs to them. Be it ours, brethren, to walk strictly, understanding the particular evils of the time, and contributing to the forces of resistance that strength which we can give, and we alone—the strength of opportunities watched for and used to the glory of God and the welfare of man.

THE WITNESS OF THE GOSPEL TO THE SOCIAL DUTY OF THE CHURCH

THE example of Jesus Christ is His law. The formula of discipleship must always remain what it originally was: a brief summons to conformity—"Follow Me." The position of unique honour which the Gospels have ever held in the visible Church is an evidence of this. They contain the law of discipleship because they record the life of Jesus Christ. It is not only natural reverence for the Divine Founder, nor yet involuntary homage to the Perfect Man that underlie this final authority of Christ's example. He Himself, on more than one occasion, proposed His own experience as the model and prophecy of the experience of His faithful servants.

"Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My Word, they will keep yours also." (S. John xv. 20, 21.) His fortunes in the world will be the type of the fortunes of discipleship so long as the world lasts.

And His example was meant to be obligatory on the conscience of discipleship. *"If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye also should do as I have done to you."* The Church has been forgetful of much, false to much, but it would be hard, if not impossible, to find any period in which the binding and final authority of Christ's example has not received recognition. It would be true to make the measure and quality of that recognition the test of discipleship. In proportion as this law of Christ's life has been followed by His disciples their witness has been clear, and their influence powerful for blessing in the earth. Among the signs which may be considered hopeful at the present time, and which go far to counterbalance the depression which seems the inevitable result of a thoughtful consideration of the outlook, both ecclesiastical and social, must surely be counted this very manifest fact, that the sense of the obligatoriness of Christ's example is real and active among disciples. The Gospel was never more plainly paramount than at this time, and if its authority be extensively abused, that also is an additional sign of its recognition.

I make no apology, then, for the title of this paper. Christian men must be deeply concerned with the urgent social questions of the time, deeply interested in the solutions which from many sides are proposed to the complex problems of modern civilization, and they turn inevitably to the Gospel

for guidance, for authority, and for inspiration. How must the Church determine her attitude towards the politics of the hour? How shall the altruistic ardours of discipleship find practical expression under the difficult conditions of an ancient and infinitely complex society? How shall our heavenly citizenship be reconciled with the claims and duties of our earthly citizenship? What guidance can the Light of the World give the statesman, the social reformer, the town councillor, the man of business, the labourer, each in his specific political or economic task? There are great movements for social change—change for the better, as their advocates say. Has the Church of Jesus Christ nothing to say on their behalf? Has the New Testament no place among the books of political science and social economy? From many sides there rise eager voices of appeal, of strong entreaty, that the greatest moral authority on the earth—for so much the Christian Church is on all hands acknowledged to be—should consent to lend support to policies which, at least, profess to be beneficent in origin and drift. What is the answer to be returned? History is a vast register of failure. What influence shall the fact have on the enthusiasms of the agonizing present? Does not faith remove the mountain? Is the most sacred Oracle dumb at such a crisis, or are its responses too ambiguous to encourage, too vague to enlighten the eager questioner? The literature of social reform teems with references to the Gospels. The fact is too notorious to require proof. In a thousand shapes the appeal is made to the example of Jesus

Christ; very astounding proposals are commended by His authority; His sacred name is inscribed on strange banners. I recognize the legitimacy of the appeal while I demur to the causes which it is supposed to assist.

Very briefly I propose to ask what is the witness of the Gospel to the social duty of the Church. Permit me to interpose the remark that the Church has a social duty. It may suit controversialists—nay, is it not their obvious interest as controversialists?—to represent every refusal to adopt their own standpoint as a denial of the social duty of the Church.

The issues are conveniently simplified until the disciple is bidden to choose between a specific social policy and a stultification of his position as the professed follower of Him whom all, both friends and foes, own to be the Prince of Social Benefactors. Believe me, the issues are not so simple, and as between disciples there is no question of repudiating the social duty of the Church. Perhaps the acerbity of discussion would vanish when the advocates of Christian Socialism recognized that their opponents are not a whit less anxious than they are to fulfil the social duty of discipleship. The contention is about methods rather than about principles, about interpretation rather than about texts. We own the duty, we share the ambition, we appeal to the same ultimate authority. Nor is there, I think, any notion of restricting the subject-matter of discipleship. Precisely because the law of discipleship is expressed in a human life its range is co-extensive with human

duty. As far as I know there are none who would dispute Dr. Hort's words:—

“Christ's hallowing lordship over human life demands the full and harmonious co-operation of its several functions. The prætermission of any one function is to that extent an abnegation of Him; the limitation of His supremacy to any one function, while the others are reserved for the control of self, or of the world without, is to that extent a rebellion against Him. His discipleship and His apostolate can be duly executed in any one sphere only when He is recognized and diligently served as Lord of All.”*

Recognizing the universal range of discipleship, it yet remains certain that the various constituents of mundane life were variously dealt with by Him, who yet designed to rescue, cleanse, and rightly order every one. He acted directly here, indirectly there; He taught darkly in parables to these, openly in plain statement to those. I stand on this variety of Christ's action, this distinctness of Christ's method; and the while I urge these on the notice of an ardent and too impatient discipleship, I demur to being accused of a desire to limit His empire over human life, or to question His guidance in every sphere of human duty. You will understand and permit this digression.

† I have observed that by some eminent and many obscure writers inferences are drawn from our Lord's

* *Way, Truth, and Life*, p. 153.

† See Canon Scott-Holland's statement of the argument in *Economic Review*, Jan., 1895, pp. 16-18.

miracles of healing, which seem to me very precarious, to say the least. If I do those writers no injustice their contention is that as Christ commended His spiritual teachings by His concern for the bodily afflictions of men, so should the Church, obeying the law of His example, commend her spiritual message by her social service. The inference is sound or excessive according to the sense of the last phrase. That the physical ills of men were interesting to Christ, that He fulfilled the character attributed to Messiah by the prophets of the great Healer, the good Physician, is manifest; that His acts of healing commended His spiritual teachings to the audience, and possibly even to the acceptance of the gross multitudes, may be admitted, though I am bound to say that the sacred record ever leaves on me the impression that Christ's miracles were rather the necessary effects of His divine personality than the expression of His deliberate policy; they were "signs" of His character, rather than aids to His mission. No doubt in experience being the first they have also come to be the last; but at the time, in common with much else, with all the mystery of humiliation which S. Paul summed up in the phrase, *ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ*, they probably were a hindrance to success.* Certainly our Saviour did most carefully abstain from using His miracles as advertisements of His mission. He straitly charged those whom He healed to keep the fact secret, and when, in spite of His precautions, His fame as a miracle-worker spread abroad, He seemed to retire before it. Moreover,

* See S. John ix. 1-3; cf. S. Luke xiii. 1-5.

He clearly distinguished the audience of discipleship from the eager attention of the multitude. "*Ye seek Me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled.*" And further, our Saviour on more than one occasion impressively asserted the connection between sin and physical suffering, and His language on this point is all the more remarkable, since He explicitly dissociated Himself from the hard, mechanical doctrine of the Pharisees on the subject. The moral affinities of physical suffering were frightfully manifest in the case of the possessed. However we interpret the expressions of the Scripture, it is evident enough that possession involved both a subjugation of the victim's will, and an oppression which might take the form of ordinary illness of the victim's body.* Our Saviour, then, as well by the necessity of His self-manifestation through appropriate signs, as by the physical connections of the moral mischief He expressly came to conquer, was forced to deal with the bodily afflictions of the men to whom He addressed Himself. The Church which perpetuates His mission and possesses His presence most rightly follows His example by concerning herself deliberately, perpetually, and (if I may use the word) corporately with the physical evils of men. The history of hospitals is a standing evidence of the influence of Christ's example on the conduct of the Church. Hospitals are only one, though perhaps

* "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.)

Cf. the description of Christ healing "one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb." (S. Matt. xii. 22-30.)

the most conspicuous provision which the charity of discipleship has made for the physical comfort of mankind. So far there is no dispute. But when the inference is made to cover the case of direct interference in economic conflicts, of direct advocacy of social legislation, or even of direct support of schemes of social reorganization—and this is the case at present—then I demur. Not less impressive, not less authoritative than Christ's activity in the healing of disease is His abstinence from interference in economic and political matters. His example is not only binding when it falls in with our preferences; it must check and restrain as well as stimulate and inspire.*

Christ did abstain from directly touching the burning practical questions of His day. I suppose that is not too much to say of the question whether or not tribute should be paid to Cæsar. Were not consciences troubled about that matter? Was it not acute? Did it not, in fact, threaten plainly to overwhelm society, as actually happened but a few years later in the rebellion of Bar-Cochba? I dwell on these points advisedly. The trouble of consciences and the urgency of the question are irrelevant to the issue whether or not the Church should take action.

But our Lord, though He refused to directly interfere in political questions, did indirectly deal with them. The answer He returned to the Herodians is not a mere refusal to have anything to do with the question, it is a comprehensive, profound

* S. Matthew xvii. 15-22.

teaching. The immediate question is unanswered; none could make party-capital (as we might say) out of Christ's answer. Herodian and Pharisee were equally rebuked. The answer enshrines a principle upon which the Christian Church has, with greater or less fidelity, determined her attitude towards the State ever since. And the same may be said of His answer to the aggrieved man, who sought His interference in a property-suit.* Our Lord's refusal to deal directly with the matter was as explicit as possible; but He did not content Himself with that refusal. He went on to teach lessons of perpetual worth about property, and its place in human life.† The author of *Pastor Pastorum* very justly comments on the importance of Christ's treatment of this applicant.

"Let us suppose for a moment that our Lord had listened to this man, and left a judgment. What would have been the result? We should have had an isolated case of the law of inheritance, on which an irreversible decision had been pronounced. Every code framed for Christian lands would have had to accept and embody this. Endless comments on this particular case would have been written, endless guesses at the circumstances of it would have been made, and every one who contested a distribution would have endeavoured to show that this decision covered his claims. Moreover, whenever the Christian

* S. Luke xii. 13-21.

† "Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness : for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth "; and the parable of the rich fool.

missionary came to a new country, instead of holding a purely spiritual position he would have brought with him a new law of inheritance as part of the new religion, and people could not have accepted his teaching without changing usages to which they clung.”*

These instances of our Lord's explicit refusal to interpose His authority into the course of social and political development raises the question which, in view of certain modern contentions, it is necessary to consider: Did Christ intend His Church to organize for herself a suitable social and political system? From my standpoint the answer must be in the negative. The Church was not intended to stand outside the social, economical, political development of the race.† An influence she would be, a very important influence she might be, a beneficent influence she ought to be, but still an influence in a wider movement, one factor of many. Is it altogether fanciful to recognize His abolition of the Pharisaic distinctions between meats clean and unclean, as enshrining a principle of very wide application? He withdrew religion from spheres wherein other forces were set to work. He would have no Theocracies of the old type. His claims were too great for such petty spheres of rule. He bade us recognize in the process of human develop-

* *Pastor Pastorum*, p. 404, .

† “Ye are the salt of the earth . . . the light of the w rld.” (S. Matt. v. 13-16.)

Cf. The description of the Christians in the world, in the anonymous Epistle to Diognetus, possibly written by Pantæus. (LIGHTFOOT, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 505.)

ment, as in the physical universe everywhere, the Divine Action.

"*My Father worketh even until now, and I work.*" (S. John v. 17.) Christ requires of us that we shall bring our best intelligence, our best conscience to the performance of civic duty, but He gives us no directions as Christians which He does not also give to those who are not Christians. We bring to our performance of civic obligations, to our treatment of social problems, to our discussion of political proposals, a heightened sense of duty, a spirit of self-sacrifice, a just judgment of the relative values of things, a faith in the possibilities of man, a great respect for his independence, a deep sympathy with his difficulties; in a single phrase, we bring the "*mind of Christ*," but we have no access to other guidance than that which the experience of the race can contribute to the intelligence of the individual. The temptation has always been great to forget this, to claim for Christianity a direct authority in the social and political sphere, to place the Church frankly on the side of types of social order or political government.* We may concede that the natural tendency of things will work out a gradual harmonizing of the external order of life and the internal conviction of Christians.

"*They put new wine into fresh wine-skins.*" Once

* The attitude of the C. S. U. during the coal-strike of 1893 is a case in point. I cannot square with the Gospel the famous Holborn resolution: "That the Christian organization of industry involves the maintenance of a living wage, by which this Conference understands such a wage as shall enable the workers to maintain healthy and human homes."

convince men in any number that they all are brethren in the one Heavenly Father's home, and you will undoubtedly lay the axe at the root of slavery, and, indeed, of all social tyranny; but you will assuredly go astray if you commit yourself to a crusade against slavery in the name of Christianity. Slavery is one form of social order, and as such Christianity has tolerated it, and can still tolerate it until it fails to commend itself to the civic conscience; then, and not till then, it will forfeit its claim to the toleration of Christ's disciples. We ought to be very slow to mark with the Sign of the Cross any scheme or method or policy, however admirable we may adjudge it, however plainly it may appear to us to express the true Christian principle. Surely the blunders of religious men in the past ought to teach modesty to religious men in the present. Monarchy did not seem less manifestly in its essence Christian to the advocates of the divine right of kings in the seventeenth century than does combination in Trades Unions now appear to Canon Scott-Holland; but monarchy is none the less not essentially Christian, and labour combinations have no better claim on our support than the case they can make out to our civic conscience.

Dean Church has pointed out the essential distinction between civilization and religion, and I quote his words the more readily since I am thus enabled to direct attention to one of the weightiest and wisest utterances on the social duty of the Church with which I am acquainted.

"Civilization cannot be said to be the same thing

as the influence of Christianity, or to be purely a result derived from it, for these tendencies to moral improvement existed before Christianity, and showed themselves by unequivocal signs, however much they were thwarted, neutralized, or at last destroyed. There are certain great virtues which social life loudly calls for and tends to foster, which, as thought grows and purposes widen, are felt more clearly to be the true and imperative conditions of all human action. Civilization, whether or not it presupposes and assists in keeping in view another life, arranges primarily and directly for this one, and these virtues it produces in increasing force and perfection as its fruit and test. It is no disparagement to that which we believe to be as infinitely greater than civilization, as the future destiny of man is greater than his present state, to acknowledge gladly that these beneficial tendencies were originally implanted in society by the author of society. But the effect has been that alongside of the influence of Christianity has grown up another influence, not independent of it, yet not identical with it; owing much—it would be bold to limit *how* much—to Christianity, yet having roots of its own; not in its own nature hostile to religion, yet moving on a separate line; sometimes wearing the guise of a rival, sometimes of a suspicious and uncongenial associate with diverging aims and incommensurate views, but always, even when most friendly, with principles and methods of its own. It has many names, and perhaps none of them happy ones; but it is that power, distinct from religion, however much it may be affected by it, which shapes

our polity, and makes our laws, and rules in our tribunals, and sets the standard in literature, and impregnates our whole social atmosphere.”*

The Gospels do seem to me to justify that distinction between sacred and secular, which has no doubt been often drawn too sharply, and sometimes has been drawn in wrong directions, but which none the less is real and fundamental. It is the distinction which Dean Church draws in the words I have quoted between Civilization and Christianity. It is drawn—as I understand His Words—by our Blessed Saviour Himself.†

“Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you.” (S. John vi. 27.)

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.” (S. Matt. vi. 19, 20.)

How sharply the distinction between the disciples and the world is drawn in the Discourses in the Upper Chamber, and in the Prayer of Christ. The famous words to Pilate do not stand alone, they are the summary of that Witness of the Gospel of which they may be considered the concluding word.

* *Gifts of Civilization*, pp. 98, 99.

† Cf. Canon BRIGHT, *Waymarks in Church History*, pp. 417-418. “The attempt to treat all things as equally sacred may result in treating all things as equally secular.”

They must be read with the commentary of the Life before and the Passion after. "*My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence.*"

I do not think the recognition of this distinction need expose us to the danger which Dr. Hort vigorously indicates, though I confess I do not quite see my way through all he says in those profound and most suggestive pages. "The Church will be false to herself and to the universality of the task committed to her if she seeks to protect the life of Christ by striving to fence it round into a little province of peculiar emotion."*

The Church is charged to perpetuate Christ's Mission, with Christ's authority, by Christ's methods. "*As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you,*" are the words which inspire the Church's Witness in the world. The influence which the Church brings to bear upon the world's life ought to be the same influence as that which Christ brought to bear on the life of His own generation, and it should be exerted in the same directions. If Christ was normally engaged in teaching men the truths which concern their eternal welfare, in bidding them lift up their minds from the visible, tangible concerns of daily routine to the supreme interests which mysteriously were bound up with them, such we may be sure is the normal task of Christ's Church. If He interested

* *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*, p. 146.

Himself in the physical ills of men, and healed them, the Church cannot do otherwise. If He asserted the sanctity of the Marriage Bond the Church cannot be indifferent on the subject; if He was silent on economic and political questions the Church may be sure she has no commission to speak. How the Church is to fulfil Christ's Ministry, to perpetuate Christ's Witness, to exert Christ's influence under the ever-changing conditions of the world's life, would seem to be reserved for the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, who lives in her. Indeed, our Saviour did so reserve the application of His own Gospel.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself: but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you." The teaching function of the Spirit will be exercised within the limits of Christ's Witness; His guidance will have reference to the Revelation once for all delivered in Christ's life.

The influence of our blessed Lord was the influence of perfect character. He did what He did in the power of His righteousness. He could face opposition with the fearless challenge, *"Which of you convicteth Me of sin?"* and by title of His innocent life He could address directly the consciences of men. *"If I say truth, why do ye not believe Me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God."* In thus

addressing Himself to consciences, He accepted very slow and limited success for His message, and so must it be with His Church. If she will be content to adopt her Founder's method, how severe must be her own self-discipline, how gradual and intermittent her success, how constant her failure! I do not trust the eagerness of Christian Socialists. They talk of the conditions of this age as so startling and so grave as to compel a change in Christian standpoints. I do not think the changing of conditions can justify much that is proposed. I venture to suggest that impatience, and the disposition to take short cuts to success, and the zeal that will annihilate those who seem to obstruct the way of the Lord, are not merely the temptations of the past, but also of the present. It is a temptation which degrades the disciple who yields to it, and charges his apparent success with the promise of the worst failure, and the witness of the Gospel is very clear against it. Christ's example requires the Church and every member of the Church to be very jealous for the independence of men, very careful not to bring illegitimate pressure to bear on human wills. We may not bring the coercive methods of the world into the service of the kingdom of heaven. And let us be thoroughly honest. Coercion in the old brutal sense of physical force is little temptation now; in civilized communities methods of violence are not tolerated, but do not suppose that therefore the ancient temptation has ceased. You can coerce men by organizing public opinion against them as truly and as efficiently as ever they were coerced by the

despots of a ruder time. You can destroy the independence of men's characters, and kill the greatness out of their conduct by other forms of bribery than that coarse obvious form which is known to our penal code.* Whatever the degree or type of unlawful pressure may be, it stands condemned by the example of Jesus Christ. Men cannot be tricked, or bullied, or bribed, or coaxed into owning His authority. The heavenly city must not by such means gather its citizens. You will not make men Christians if you begin by making them hypocrites. Christ would not accept unreal discipleship. Significantly enough His sternest teachings were called forth by the indications of popularity.† He was quite intolerant of delusion; men must come to Him with their eyes open. Is there no lesson here for the ardour of social reformers? Is there no rebuke for those who are for ever seeking to make the Church popular? Is there no warning as to the real worth of such popularity as she succeeds in gaining? When the Church can take on to her lips her Master's description of His earthly life, "*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work,*" she need not greatly concern herself about the results of her labours, even though her failure be as apparently complete as His.

* This is my objection against the "White Lists" of the C. S. U. The principle is wrong, and ultimately the result cannot help being degraded. Human virtue is too fragile for these violent experiments.

† See S. Luke xiv. 25-35; S. John vi. 15, 22, *sq.*

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

*Preached on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 15th, 1896,
in the Chapel.*

“Those that use the world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.”—I CORINTHIANS vii. 31.*

THE Epistles of S. Paul to the Church in Corinth are, from the standpoint of the student of Christian History, singularly difficult and important. The introduction of Christianity into the midst of a great Pagan city involved the raising and, at least, the provisional solution of many difficult problems. How far must the new faith disturb and change the old manner of life? Human society has necessary requirements of its own—there are conditions of human life which are older than Christianity and, in some sense, independent of Christianity. Here are the claims of the State, the unformulated yet, perhaps, even more imperious claims of society; the complex network of relationships, especially that great basal relationship of the sexes which

* The English happily preserves the paronomasia in the Greek. *καὶ οἱ χρώμενοι τὸν κόσμον ὡς μὴ καταχρώμενοι· παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου,*

seems to be the ultimately determining factor in most social problems, and these claims have taken customary expression, they are enshrined in the myriad fashions, traditions, usages, unwritten codes of conduct, accepted standards of duty which belong to and, in the sum, determine the character of an ancient civilization. These may be called the furniture of human life, of which physical conditions are the habitation. And into the very heart of this complex, organized, venerable society there is suddenly introduced the faith of Jesus Christ. The society of the Church begins to grow with the fresh vigour of youth in the very centres of ancient Pagan civilization, as in the country I have observed an ash growing strongly through, and apparently out of the hollow trunk of an exhausted but yet living oak. It is evident that there will emerge manifold friction, complication, and disturbance. These consequences, we may remind ourselves, were expressly contemplated by the Divine Founder of Christianity. He spoke with startling plainness of the disruptions which His Gospel would occasion :—

“Think not that I came to send peace on the earth ; I came not to send peace but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law ; and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” Not less plainly did our Lord repudiate the aims and modes of secular warfare. In a series of parables He declared the calmness and, so to speak, naturalness of the process by which Christianity should be established in the

world: The seed cast into the ground, growing unnoticed and unheard; the leaven hid in three measures of meal, working silently but surely; the draught-net spread out in the waters, of which it does not even ruffle the surface—these and similar metaphors convey the same impression. Christ summed up His habitual teaching when He spoke the memorable words to Pontius Pilate—words which face every Christian generation with the comfort of divine assurance, and the severity of divine rebuke:

“My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence.”

We find the same double and apparently contradictory aspect presented by the Gospel in the hands of its first missionaries. It seemed to the heathen, among whom it was proclaimed, a veritable message of social revolt: the authorities looked upon it with suspicion: the leaders of society held aloof: the clever men, the learned, the philosophers could not conceal their contempt. *“These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also”* was the cry raised when the apostles appeared. S. Paul was writing from life when in the first chapter of the epistle before us he drew his famous picture of the world's reception of the Gospel:

“Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? . . . Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-

block, and unto Gentiles foolishness . . . not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." On the other hand, nothing was farther from the mind of the apostles than to break suddenly and abruptly the established traditions of ordered life. They consistently preached loyalty to the State: they exhorted men to acquiesce in the arrangements of society. The chapter before us is an impressive example of their teaching. The apostle has been asked by the Corinthians to direct them as to their duty in the difficult and delicate questions which, in consequence of discipleship, arose in connexion with the relation of the sexes. Ought men to marry under the circumstances of Pagan life, when the end of the world was—such was the universal belief of Christians at the time—so near at hand? Ought the Christian wife to continue with the heathen husband, or the Christian husband retain the heathen wife? Ought fathers to give their daughters in marriage? These and similar questions were of urgent practical importance: the welfare, nay, the existence of many homes depended on the answers which S. Paul returned. He is very careful to define the measure of authority which his answers can claim. Thus he advances the absolute and final authority of Christ Himself for the decision that not even discipleship could be pleaded against the marriage bond. "*Unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, that the wife depart not from her husband . . . and that the husband leave not his wife.*" This is the grand principle: marriage is a divine institution, and as such, not to be revolted against in

the supposed interest of religion. In applying this principle to the actual cases of mixed marriages, S. Paul speaks with the high but secondary authority of the Apostolate. "*To the rest say I, not the Lord: If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman which hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband . . . Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace.*" So S. Paul tolerates in the case of fanatical heathen wives and persecuting heathen husbands that disruption of the home, which Christ Himself had contemplated. Yet immediately, as if fearful of having conceded too much, the apostle addresses to Christian husbands and wives an exhortation to have faith and be patient. "*For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife? Only as the Lord hath distributed to each man, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the churches.*" S. Paul pauses to apply this principle of acquiescence, of continuance in existing situations, of loyalty to actual claims to two prominent cases, which were general and urgent at the time. Ought a man on becoming a disciple to repudiate his religious status as Jew or Gentile? Ought he to repudiate his social status as freeman or bond-slave? In both cases the apostle returns a negative answer. Discipleship is independent of status, greater, deeper, more lasting. Privilege has

no intrinsic value: social status does not affect the real liberty. "*Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called.*"

"Such a thing is Christianity," exclaims S. Chrysostom, in one of those famous homilies, which may take rank with S. Paul's Epistles as providing the clearest insight into the actual conditions of discipleship in the ancient world—"in slavery to bestow freedom . . . For this cause his bidding is, remain a slave. . . . And how shall slavery be able to hurt? It is not slavery itself, beloved, that hurts; but the real slavery is that of sin. And, if thou be not a slave in this sense, be bold and rejoice. No one shall have power to do thee any wrong, having the temper which cannot be enslaved. But if thou be a slave to sin, even though thou be ten thousand times free, thou hast no good of thy liberty."

The apostle recommends the unmarried state generally as appropriate to the "present distress," and more particularly as leaving greater freedom for the Lord's work. The "present distress" must be understood as a reference to the Second Advent, supposed to be imminent, the occurrence of which would be accompanied by those tremendous calamities which the Jews were accustomed to describe by the impressive phrase, "the pangs of the Messiah,"* and of which our Lord gave solemn warning to His disciples. In view of those "*days of travail*" now so close at hand there was an in-

* v. LIGHTFOOT, *Works*, xi. 421-423, where Rabbinic references are collected.

congruity, almost an insolence, in contracting new secular ties, "*marrying and giving in marriage.*" Rather it were fitting to regard existing relationships as cancelled in everything but the article of duty. S. Paul's language is remarkably similar to that of the Apocryphal book known as the Second Book of Esdras, which, however, was probably not written for nearly a generation after the apostle wrote the epistle before us.* I will quote the passage, not only for its interest, but because it will serve to bring out the sense of S. Paul:

"O My people, hear My word: make you ready to the battle, and in those evils be even as pilgrims upon the earth. He that selleth, let him be as he that fleeth away: and he that buyeth as one that will lose: he that occupieth merchandize, as he that hath no profit by it, and he that buildeth as he that shall not dwell therein: he that soweth, as if he should not reap: so also he that pruneth the vines, as he that shall not gather the grapes: they that marry as they that shall get no children; and they that marry not as the widowed. Inasmuch as they that labour labour in vain: for strangers shall reap their fruits, and spoil their goods, overthrow their houses, and take their children captive, for in captivity and famine shall they beget their children: and they that traffick, traffick to become a spoil: the more they deck their cities, their houses, their possessions, and their own persons, the more will I hate them for their sins, saith the Lord."

* "It was evidently written only a short time after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; and in all probability its date is to be assigned to the reign of Domitian (81-96 A.D.)."—Prof. RYLE, in *Cambridge Companion to Bible*, p. 62.

It is not surprising that S. Paul's language was misunderstood. We find that at least in one Gentile Church the apostle had to rebuke with severity a disposition to make the nearness of the Second Advent an excuse for neglecting the plain duties of life, and, in fact, for basing a disgraceful idleness on the pretence of an absorbing piety. "*Even when we were with you, this we commanded you. If any will not work, neither let him eat,*" writes S. Paul to the Thessalonians. This scandalous abuse of the apostle's teaching cannot detract from its essential agreement with our sense of fitness. In times of great anxiety or distress we resent, and resent justly, proposals of action, new plans, new engagements. We echo Elisha's indignant words to the covetous Gehazi, who, even in the decline of the national fortunes, and in presence of a representative of the Syrian power which was destined to work the final overthrow of the kingdom of Israel, could yet turn his thoughts towards his self-advantage.* "*Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive-yards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?*" We can under-

* cf. the Pharisees who after the destruction of the Temple would neither eat flesh nor drink wine. "To whom R. Josua, Why, O my sons, do ye not eat flesh nor drink wine? And they answered, Should we eat flesh, of which we were wont to offer on the altar, and now it is perished? and shall we drink wine, of which we were wont to pour out upon the altar, and now it is ceased? When a wicked empire ruled over Israel, and decreed rough things against them, and made the law and the precept cease from them, and permitted them not to circumcise their children, they said to Rabbi Josua, It is fit, that we resolve among ourselves, not to contract marriage, nor beget sons."—LIGHTFOOT, vol. xii. p. 499.

stand that among the Armenian Christians, who have for many months been surrendered to the foulest oppression, that S. Paul's language would still possess all its original power and persuasiveness. That would be a base Armenian who, while his race was in jeopardy of actual extirpation, while his faith was daily subjected to infamous insult, could give himself to thoughts of marriage, of business, of self-advancement. On the morrow of an earthquake, when the landscape is an almost unrecognisable scene of ruin, men cannot find the heart to make plans, or energy to undertake exertion. And as the memory of a great calamity paralyses men's faculties, so does the expectation of disaster. There is an inherent and irresistible repugnance to the bustle and eagerness of ordinary business at a time when life is shadowed by a great woe, and hearts are breaking beneath an intolerable strain. We claim and we receive at such times the homage of silence. But it may be urged with much force: the gloomy counsels of S. Paul have no fitness, and can find no possible practical application in our own age, when the expectation of the end of the world, which plainly inspired them, can hardly be said to retain a place among the convictions of believers. May we not relegate this harsh and repulsive chapter to the category of obsolete and abrogated speculations?

It is worth while for a few moments, before we conclude, to consider what answer to return to that question. It must be conceded by the most resentful that the text scarcely reads like a transitory counsel dictated by panic, and useless, not to say absurd,

now the panic is over. "*Those that use the world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.*" Not even the most worldly will fail to recognize a disturbing appearance of truth in the last sentence. The "fashion"* of the world, that is, the aspect which it is presenting to view at any given moment, passes away, to be replaced immediately by another "fashion" equally authoritative and equally transitory. The image is probably drawn from the shifting scenes of a theatre, which, indeed, fill the whole view of the spectator while they occupy the stage, but which are none the less the production of a mechanism which will remove and replace them as easily as it set them up.

Who will question the fleeting character of even the most apparently durable of terrestrial fashions?

Not only customs change, and change quickly, but ideas change, canons of taste change, systems of thought change, the mightiest institutions change. The extent and rapidity of terrestrial change escape us in common life, but in the retrospect of time, when we pause to note the experiences through which we have been passing, to take our bearings in the voyage of existence, we are almost staggered at the vastness of the revolution which has silently, and without attracting our regard, passed over the world. Even in the affairs of this life we are quick to recognize the folly of allying ourselves too closely with any particular phase of public sentiment, or committing our fortunes unreservedly to any specific arrangement of society. The man who in business,

* v. TRENCH, *Synonyms of N. T.*, pp. 262-267.

or in politics, refuses to recognize the mutability of the world's fashion may, by his dogged courage, command our admiration, but cannot be adjudged other than an unreflective fool notwithstanding. This sentence, which provides the basis of S. Paul's admonition in the text, helps us to understand it. To *use* the world rightly is to treat it with due regard to its transitory character. We are immortal beings; our hearts can only rightly rest on immortal things; the interests of earth, urgent, plausible, powerful, alluring, are but the "*husks which the swine do eat.*" S. Augustine's famous saying declares a truth which the long history of human disillusionment has affirmed, and still affirms, and shall affirm for ever. "Fecisti nos ad Te, Domine; et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te." "O Lord, Thou hast fashioned us for Thyself; and our soul has no rest until it rests in Thee." A greater than S. Augustine cried the same warning. "*Work not for the meat which perisheth,*" saith the Lord, "*but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.*" We abuse the world when we throw ourselves heart and soul into its interests and engagements. We should remember that our real concern with these is but slight and brief. We, brethren, not less than those heroes of faith whose noble record illumines the history of the race, must confess, when we consider seriously our position in the world, that we too "*are strangers and pilgrims on the earth,*" making it manifest even in the very mid-course of temporal business that we, as they, are "*seeking after a country*

of our own." An ancient Christian writer* has described the position of the citizens of the heavenly city in the world under the suggestive metaphor of the soul in the body. "The soul is enclosed in the body, and yet itself holdeth the body together; so Christians are kept in the world as in a prison-house, and yet they themselves hold the world together. The soul, though itself immortal, dwelleth in a mortal tabernacle; so Christians sojourn amidst perishable things, while they look for the imperishability which is in the heavens."

"*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,*" said Christ, and we should indeed be wise if we took the words to heart. "*The fashion of this world passeth away*"—none can deny it; the evidences of change, decay, departure, death, are too many and too manifest to escape the regard of the least observant. Whence comes it that, in spite of this, the empty, passing world, with its tinsel glory and hollow pretence, yet chains our hearts and absorbs our affections?

"*Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*" To be a Christian is to be linked on to the Eternal Reality, even in the midst of the ebb and flow of the changing world. "*Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee,*" runs the word

* The author of the anonymous fragment known as the "Epistle to Diognetus."—v. LIGHTFOOT, *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 505. It "consists of two fragments, of which the latter portion is sometimes assigned to about 130, while the first part is possibly of yet earlier date."—Prof. RYLE, *Cambridge Companion*, p. 11.

of ancient promise: the word which finds ample fulfilment in every human life which has anchored itself for time and for eternity to the Rock of Ages; for though "*the world passeth away and the lust thereof,*" yet still it is true that "*he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*"

CHRISTIANITY AND CHILDHOOD

*Preached on the Sunday after Christmas, Dec. 27th, 1896,
in the Hospital.*

“The Child Jesus.”—S. LUKE ii. 27.

IT is a common observation that an affection for children, and what invariably goes with it, the power of drawing forth the affection of children, are among the best signs of character anyone can possess. Few people, I think, would be disposed to deny that a dislike of children, and the quality of drawing upon oneself children's dislike, are very unfavourable witnesses to character. Whether this general conviction be well founded or not, there can be no question as to its existence, and it argues an attitude of mind with regard to childhood not less interesting than significant. It may, I think, be said with truth that this attitude of mind is strictly limited to Christian society, by which I mean society which acknowledges the authority and has developed under the influence of Christian ideas. Certainly we are not now accustomed to consider a regard for children as a specially Christian disposition: it is part and parcel of the general and settled opinions of civilized men: we should naturally rank it among the notions

which belong to humanity as such, rather than to humanity as Christian. In doing so we have certainly this measure of justification, that the affectionate regard for children has a natural basis ; it is a true development of that parental sense which is an essential element of human nature. But that parental sense, outside the sphere of Christian influence, has not been able to exercise a sufficiently commanding authority over human action : everywhere it has yielded to the hostile pressure of other forces. Christmastide turns our thought to childhood ; on every hand, wherever Christianity prevails, men are thinking and speaking about *the Child Jesus*. Even the prejudices of religious disagreement, or the more relentless resentments of anti-Christian belief, cannot resist the charm of this festival. The sourest sectary and the most scornful infidel waive their objections, and the Birthday of Jesus Christ wins the unique distinction of universal celebration.

I take this opportunity then of considering briefly the influence of Christianity on childhood. What was the prevailing doctrine about childhood when Christ was born in Bethlehem ? It is a safe rule that the best statement of men's beliefs is their practice. Applying that rule to the case before us, we can have no doubt at all as to the general opinion of civilized mankind 1900 years ago. I am not speaking now of the opinion of the brutal and degraded sections of ancient society. It would be as unfair to judge Paganism by such, as it would be to judge Christianity by the slum and the police-court. No, I am speaking of the opinion as illustrated

by the practice of the best men of Pagan society. Now, for the purpose of our present discussion, we may examine the practice of Paganism with reference to the crime of infanticide. Infanticide, probably, was commonly regarded as a wrong thing among the Pagans, though the greatest names of antiquity may be counted among its advocates and apologists; but it was considered a very venial offence.

"Infanticide," observes Mr. Lecky,* "as is well known, was almost universally admitted among the Greeks, being sanctioned, and in some cases enjoined, upon what we should now call 'the greatest happiness principle,' by the ideal legislations of Plato and Aristotle, and by the actual legislations of Lycurgus and Solon."

The exposition of children may be regarded as practically identical in moral turpitude with infanticide, and of exposition we may safely affirm that it was the rule and not the exception of Pagan life.

"The exposition of children," says Gibbon,† "was the prevailing and stubborn vice of antiquity. It was sometimes prescribed, often permitted, almost always practised with impunity."

The Stoic philosopher, Seneca,‡ is justly regarded with admiration. His writings abound in utterances so profound, so true, so elevated, as to be not unworthy of comparison with the teachings of the New

* *v. History of European Morals*, ch. iv.

† *Decline and Fall*, ch. 44.

‡ *v. Bishop LIGHTFOOT'S Essay on S. Paul and Seneca in Philip-
pians*, pp. 270-328.

Testament. He must certainly be regarded as representing the highest morality of Paganism. He was a contemporary of the Apostle Paul, and the brother of that amiable proconsul of Achaia, Gallio, to whose broad-minded equity the apostle owed his escape from the violence of the Corinthian Jews. What was Seneca's opinion about these horrible practices of killing and exposing infants? He leaves us in no doubt on the matter :

"Monstrous births we destroy," he writes, "children, if they are weak and deformed, we drown. It is not wrath but reason to separate the useless from the sound."

You may be sure that if such was the teaching of the best Pagans, the practice of the average multitude proceeded on even lower principles. The utilitarian basis which the philosopher proposed for child-murder would be exchanged by the selfish and the licentious for very much lower considerations. We know how even in the face of Christianity, under the terror of righteously stern laws, watched by a justly resentful public opinion, the cruelty of avarice and the abominable recklessness of lust continue to work out their achievements of infamy. What must the children of the Pagans have endured when there were no restraining principles in religion, and no deterrent terrors in the law !

We turn now to consider the attitude of Christianity towards these prevailing practices of child-murder and exposure. In the Gospels, and indeed generally in the New Testament, these offences are scarcely mentioned, for the sufficient reason that the writings

of the New Testament belong almost entirely to the time when Christianity was face to face with Judaism, and Judaism was honourably free from the cruelty and profligacy which reigned in Pagan society. When we pass to the literature of the sub-apostolic age the case is different. In the earliest treatises on Christian morals which have survived, we note that abortion and child-murder are specifically condemned. I will content myself with a single reference to the *Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles*,* a manual probably not later than the end of the first or the beginning of the second century. "And the second commandment of the teaching is: Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not corrupt boys, thou shalt not commit fornication, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not use enchantments, thou shalt not procure abortion, nor shalt thou kill the new-born child, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods."

An anonymous writer of the second century, the author of the Epistle to Diognetus, institutes a most interesting comparison between Christians and Pagans, from which I extract the following: "Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. They marry like all other men, and they beget children: but they do not cast away their offspring. They have their meals in common, but not their wives. They find themselves in the flesh, and yet they live not after the flesh. Their existence is in earth, but their citizenship is in heaven."

* *Didache*, c. ii. This little treatise was probably a manual used in the training of catechumens. The prohibition of child-murder is repeated in the *Ep. of Barnabas*, c. xix.

S. Justin Martyr, in the earlier of his *Apologies*,* written probably about the year 148 of our era, thus expresses the prevailing Christian opinion:—

“We, however, to avoid bringing oppression on any one, or sinning ourselves, are taught that it is unlawful to expose even new-born children; in the first place, because we see almost all those that are so—not only the females, but also the males—trained to purposes of prostitution . . . Again, another reason against exposing infants is, lest any one of them may not be found, but may perish, and we be homicides.” The compassion of Christians went forth to these abandoned little ones, doomed by their parents to death, or disgrace more terrible than death. The widows and virgins of the Church included among their regular works of piety, the care of these outcast babes. Among the very earliest recorded charitable institutions we find mention of children’s homes or orphanages. S. Ignatius counts it among the tokens of those “who hold strange doctrine touching the grace of Jesus Christ,”† that they “have no care for love, none for the widow, none for the orphan, none for the afflicted, none for the prisoner, none for the hungry or thirsty.” When persecution ceased, and with the conversion of Constantine the perilous era of secular prosperity began, these institutions for destitute children attracted the lavish support of Christians, and I need not remind you that they retain their place in popular regard at

* *Apology* i., 27, 29.

† *Epistle to the Smyrneans*, c. vi.—v. LIGHTFOOT, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. ii. pp. 304-306.

this present time. It may interest the choir-boys to know that both at Rome and Constantinople orphans from the orphanage were employed as choristers;* and that at Rome, a thousand years ago, the orphanage came to be used as the Singers' School. It is the natural development, brethren, from good works to acceptable worship. He sings best who lives best. But this is a digression.

It would take me too long to trace the effect of Christian influence upon the legislation of the empire, and I will conclude this part of my sermon with Mr. Lecky's summary: "It may be safely asserted that the publicity of the trade in exposed children became impossible under the influence of Christianity, and that the sense of the serious nature of the crime was very considerably increased . . . This minute and scrupulous care for human life and human virtue in the humblest forms, in the slave, the gladiator, the savage, or the infant, was indeed wholly foreign to the genius of Paganism. It was produced by the Christian doctrine of the inestimable value of each immortal soul. It is the distinguishing and transcendent characteristic of every society into which the spirit of Christianity has passed."

If this be the case, then that regard for children, which is now the common possession of civilized humanity, is really the creation of Christianity. It did not exist in præ-Christian Paganism: it has never existed outside the sphere of Christian influence. We proceed to inquire how Christianity

* *v. Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, art. "Orphanage": "In some Greek rituals the word *ὀρφανοὶ* is used for 'choir-boys.'"

achieved this immense triumph. It may be true, to some extent it clearly is true, that specific doctrines as to the future life, and the eternal misery of unbaptized infants, may have contributed; but I think it must be conceded that the main influence has been that of Christ's own Person and Example. It is surely not the least impressive indication of His unique greatness that the result of His personal associations should be so powerful and so permanent. If you examine the history of Christianity you will find that the abiding practices and beliefs are precisely those which have their model and exposition in the life of Jesus Christ. The tradition of the Gospels presents to the view of discipleship in large prominence, not certainly of great detail, but rather in a few broad touches, Christ as an infant, and as a young boy. The immense popularity of S. Luke's Gospel probably arises from the fact that it alone includes the history of the Nativity at Bethlehem, and the episode with the Doctors in the temple. It is no merely modern sentiment that has fastened on those tender and beautiful narratives. The greatest of the earlier Fathers, S. Irenæus, perceived their religious importance as indicating the range of Christ's redemptive activity.* "He came to save all through Himself: all, I mean, who through Him are born anew unto God, infants and little children, and boys and youths, and elders. Accordingly He came through every age, with infants becoming an infant, hallowing infants; among little children a little child,

* I quote Dr. Hort's translation in that charming little volume, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, p. 72.

hallowing those of that very age, at the same time making Himself to them an example of dutifulness, and righteousness, and subjection; among young men a young man, becoming an example to young men and hallowing them to the Lord. So also an elder among elders, that He might be a perfect Teacher in all things, not only as regards the setting forth of the truth, but also as regards age, at the same time hallowing also the elders, becoming likewise an example to them. Lastly, He came also even unto death, that He might be the first begotten from the dead, Himself holding the primacy in all things, the Author of life, before all things, and having precedence of all things."

S. Irenæus wrote those words more than seventeen centuries ago. It is impossible to add to their truth and lucidity. Christ is the model of childhood as truly as of manhood; but more than this, Christ declares childhood to be specially close to Himself. When will the disciple ever be able to read unmoved the evangelist's account of the divine Lord face to face with "*little children*"? When will the echoes of His indignation at those disciples who would have driven the babes from Him have died away in Christendom? Historically the practice of the Church in baptizing infants grows out of His words, "*Suffer the little children to come unto Me: forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.*" There have been other arguments in abundance. The antiquarians would trace an apostolic origin for the practice; the theologians would base it on the nature of the sacrament; the zealots for eccle-

siastical authority would assert the sentence of the Church. There is something in all the arguments, not so much as their respective advocates suppose, but still something; yet I am very sure that the broad reason which has determined, and always will determine the action of discipleship, is that which lies on the surface of the Gospel. Children came to Jesus Christ naturally: they divined, with that unerring insight of theirs, the sweetness and purity and love of His Character, and He found solace and refreshment in their clean, young, trusting hearts. "*He took them in His arms, and blessed them, laying His hands upon them.*" There is our warrant for baptizing children, and we want no better. We gain a real view of our Lord's Personality when we read of His rebuking the ambition of His apostles by the help of a child. The expressions of the evangelists are full of interest. S. Matthew tells us that "*He called to Him a little child.*" Brethren, children will not come to every man's call; they are shy and timid, and will oftener run away than come near when they hear the summons of the stranger, but the voice of Jesus has no terrors for little ones. S. Mark adds that He "*took the child up in His arms.*" That is the action of One who loves children, and naturally caresses them. Finally, S. Luke relates that He "*set the child by His side.*" Memorable spectacle! The two teachers side by side in face of the Church—the Incarnate Son of God and a little child. And sitting thus the Lord interpreted childhood, and told the secret of its spiritual supremacy. "*Whosoever shall receive this little child*

in My name, receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth Him that sent Me: for He that is least among you all, the same is great." The little child with his clear brow and pure, bright eyes, and loving open heart, and utter frankness of trust, can take in without let or hindrance the hallowing graces of the Spirit. We older folks have a mist before our eyes as we face the Master—defiling memories of sin, puzzling connections with the world, strange, hungry longings, lingering bitternesses of failure and injury. We face Him as a great city faces the glorious sun, covering itself with the fogs and vapours which rise from its turbid, toiling life, and always dimming, sometimes even obscuring altogether, the blessed Light; but the little child meets Jesus Christ as the still mountain pool meets the open heaven, taking its colour, and reflecting its beauty. Explain it how you will, this openness to good, this natural sympathy with innocence, is the prerogative of childhood, and the secret of its distinctive charm.

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar :
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

This nearness to God, this natural sympathy with Jesus Christ, explains the moral influence of little children. Hard men of the world, their faces seamed with the lines of selfishness, their hearts frozen, as it

appears, have been saved by the confidence and love of children. Obdurate quarrels, bitter estrangements protracting themselves from year to year, and leading into bondage every relationship of life, have yielded to the unconscious rebuke of a child. In thousands of homes the Blessed Peacemakers are the little ones. Surely the prophet spake in parables when he foretold the time in which "*the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them.*" Tired hearts, bruised by the world's wrongs, disillusioned, dejected, nearly in despair, find balm and renewal at the shrine of a child's heart. It is an absolution when in our self-contempt we discover that in one pure mind no doubt of us finds entrance; it is a benediction as from divine lips when that selfless affection clings round us. Finally, brethren, it is the natural moral supremacy of children that adds such appalling guilt to their moral hurt. You remember how this thought rose upon Christ as He held the little child beside Him: "*Whoso shall receive one such little child in My name, receiveth Me: but whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on Me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.*" And He spoke yet more mysteriously, as if His eyes were fixed on the other world where are the substances of these earthly shadows. "*See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My*

Father which is in heaven." How fearful is the ruin of childhood! what infamy of desecration! what abomination of cruelty! All men grow relentless in their wrath when they encounter the oppression of a child; but, my brethren, our Lord was not speaking of that outrage when He warned us against causing His little ones to stumble. The utter trust of a child may be abused to its deception; the frank, open mind may be abominably polluted; the eager readiness to follow may be made the occasion of deplorable perversion.

I appeal more directly to you, fathers and elder brothers, older men in whose presence young boys live and work, in audience of whose conversation young ears stand open, in view of whose examples young eyes are observant. Look to it that you lead them to no harm; look to it that you do not waste the homage of their confidence. These are days of great freedom of speech; matters are openly discussed which our fathers would have prohibited as unfit for discussion; and in all discussions a license of language is now common which would have shocked an older generation. Religion is freely talked about, and the reverence of the speakers, and their knowledge, do not always keep pace with their freedom. Take heed how you speak of religion before children. Do not force on their pure minds the scepticism which is the shadow of your own sin. Let all the love, and loyalty, and enthusiasm of their young hearts expand freely, with no deadly frosts of unbelief and withering blasts of scorn to destroy them in the bud.

Reverence little children, my brothers, as standing nearer the throne of God than we, their elders; recognize in their unspoiled innocence the features of the *Child Jesus*. Sit at their feet and learn again the forgotten lessons of your own childhood. Humble yourselves, as the proud Syrian, to such lowly aid. It may be that your leprosy also shall be purged, and *your flesh come again like unto the flesh of a little child, and you too be clean*. Reverence little children, you mothers, to whom God has given the holy task of their earliest nurture. You have received them, remember, from the font of baptism, where the awful sign was placed on their infant brows, and the awful pledges given. They are Christ's children for evermore; look to it that in your hands they learn no disloyalty to Him. Rather be you their guardian angels, ever ministrant in love about their way in life. Be it your blessed task to water the divine seed within their hearts; your blessed privilege to watch the fair blossoming of their discipleship.

Let Christmastide, with its tender thoughts of the Royal Child of Bethlehem, with its solemn Eucharists, with its joyousness of family reunions, of hearts softened and responsive, of gentle charities, of mutual goodwill, lead us all to love more deeply and serve more wisely the little ones of Christ. So shall every home find consecration, and above every house glow the beacon star of Christ's manifestation.

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY

*Fourth Sunday after Easter, May 3rd, 1896,
in the Hospital.*

“Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you.”
COLOSSIANS iv. 9.

THERE is scarcely any name in the New Testament which has attracted more interest than this of Philemon's slave, whom S. Paul so affectionately describes. He is the subject of the only private letter of the apostle which has survived out of the many which, we may be sure, he wrote. The little Epistle to Philemon “is wholly occupied with an incident of domestic life. The occasion which called it forth was altogether commonplace.” Precisely for this reason it possesses an interest and a value which are unique. We are able to see by its light the actual working of the Gospel upon the most characteristic, fundamental, and important institution of ancient society—the institution of slavery.

“Onesimus,” observes Bishop Lightfoot, “represented the least respectable type of the least respectable class in the social scale. . . . He was a slave, and what was worse a Phrygian slave; and

he had confirmed the popular estimate of his class and nation by his own conduct. He was a thief and a runaway." Like most rogues of every class, he had fled to Rome; in the vast population of the world's capital he might pass unknown and unnoticed, until the memory of his offence had faded away, and he could move about without fear of discovery and arrest. "But at Rome the apostle spread his net for him, and he was caught in its meshes. . . . He listened, was impressed, was convinced, was baptized. The slave of Philemon became the freedman of Christ."

But discipleship could not permit the impunity which Onesimus had hoped to find in Rome. Repentance cannot escape the duty, however difficult and humiliating, of restitution. Onesimus must go back to his master, acknowledge his own fault, beseech his master's forgiveness, and accept his punishment. This was his duty, but none the less repulsive and perilous. "By returning he would place himself entirely at the mercy of the master whom he had wronged. Roman law . . . practically imposed no limits to the power of the master over the slave. The alternative of life or death rested solely with Philemon, and slaves were constantly crucified for far lighter offences than his. A thief and a runaway, he had no claim to forgiveness."

But Philemon was a Christian, and his exercise of the limitless authority which the Roman law secured to him over Onesimus could not be wholly uninfluenced by the fact. Philemon had been converted to Christianity by the preaching of S. Paul,

and that circumstance gave the apostle the right and the opportunity of addressing him on behalf of Onesimus. Nothing could possibly be more dignified, more persuasive, or more touching than this letter. Let us read it while the circumstances which determined its composition are fresh in our minds. After courteous salutations and expressions of thanksgiving after S. Paul's custom, he proceeds thus with the main purpose of the letter :

“ Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, who was aforetime unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart: whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the Gospel: but without thy mind I would do nothing: that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will. For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever; no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If, then, thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. But if he hath wronged thee at all, or oweth thee ought, put that to mine account; I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the

Lord: refresh my heart in Christ. Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say."

At the same time S. Paul despatched by Tychicus the Epistle to the Colossians, in which, as we read in the text, he commends Onesimus to the regard of the Church as one who was acquainted with his circumstances, and stood high in his regard. "*All my affairs shall Tychicus make known unto you . . . together with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you.*"

[What happened to Onesimus we cannot certainly know. Tradition, as usual, has been active in filling the void places of history, and has woven much legend around his name, but we know nothing certainly. We may, however, agree with Bishop Lightfoot, that "it is reasonable to suppose that Philemon would not belie the apostle's hopes; that he would receive the slave as a brother; that he would even go beyond the express terms of the apostle's petition and emancipate the penitent."]

This Epistle to Philemon is very disappointing to those who expect Christianity to interfere with a strong hand in the course of human history, condemning tyranny and redressing wrong. S. Paul does not say one word against the institution of slavery; on the contrary, he explicitly recognizes it; and, as a matter of fact, his recognition has been largely and, indeed, excessively used by the advocates of slavery in later times. Elsewhere, we remember, the apostle touches on the institution, and always in the same spirit. So in this Epistle

to the Colossians we find the exhortation, which also appears in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "*Servants [that is, slaves], obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord.*" In the seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians he directly considers the question whether or not discipleship ought to prohibit servitude, and he decides in the negative.* "*Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called being a bondservant? care not for it; but if thou canst become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord, being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he that was called, being free, is Christ's bondservant. Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men. Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God.*" S. Paul deliberately refuses to bring discipleship into the interminable controversy which fills human society and inspires human politics. Discipleship deals with profounder interests; circumstances, the highest and the lowest, the happiest and the worst, are petty, and cannot touch the heart of things. The best-placed can but be a disciple; the worst-placed need be nothing less. The social distinctions which men most regard are meaningless

* 1 Cor. vii. 20, 21. δοῦλος ἐκλήθης; μή σοι μελέτω' ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον χρῆσαι. The last clause has been diversely understood, either (α) as recommending the slave to accept his liberty, or (β) as dissuading him from doing so. It seems evident to me that the second sense is alone accordant with the general context, and with the usual teaching of S. Paul. (v. Stanley's note on the passage.)

in the highest sphere. "*There can be neither bond nor free . . . for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus.*" The disappointment which ardent social reformers feel when they read the New Testament is by no means relieved or diminished when they direct their attention to the history of Christianity. It would be far easier to prove that the Church had sanctioned slavery than that she had condemned it; the enemy of Christianity has ready to hand, in the canons of Church Councils, a whole armoury of controversial weapons.* It was not until the ninth century that the priestly benediction was permitted in the Eastern Empire to be given to the marriage of slaves; and four centuries later there is evidence that equality in this fundamental matter was grudgingly conceded in some quarters. In the West there is abundant evidence that the Church accepted slavery for centuries. To give but one example.†

* In the old Roman society in the Eastern Empire this distinction between the marriage of the freeman and the concubinage of the slave was long recognized by Christianity itself. These unions were not blessed, as the marriages of their superiors had soon begun to be, by the Church. Basil, the Macedonian (867-886), first enacted that the priestly benediction should hallow the marriage of the slave. (MILMAN, p. 15.)

† *Hefele Councils*, vol. iv. p. 595.

S. Gregory was clearly exercised in mind on the subject. Neander quotes the following from his writings:

"Since our Redeemer, the Author of the whole work of creation, took upon Himself human nature in order that He might free us by His grace from the bonds of that slavery in which we were held, and restore us to our original liberty, so does it appear that something salutary is done, when men, whom nature created free at the beginning, but whom the law of nations has subjected to the yoke of bondage, are restored to liberty." (Vol. v. p. 129.)

The important point is that alongside of this conviction S. Gregory, as all other Christians, held slaves and bought them.

A Roman synod, presided over by the great and deservedly venerated pontiff S. Gregory, in the year 595, passed the following canon: "It often happens that slaves, who belong to the Church or to secular people, wish to enter a monastery. If we allow this the Church will at last lose all her slaves. If, however, we do not permit their entrance into a monastery we refuse an offering to God. Therefore, if a slave shall henceforth wish to enter a convent his conduct shall first be carefully examined, and if this be blameless, entrance shall be allowed him."

I quote this canon advisedly. It illustrates at once the acquiescence of the Church in the institution of slavery, and the difficulty which the Christian conscience found in reconciling such acquiescence with discipleship, for it is time that we should look at the other side of the witness of history. If it is certain that neither the New Testament nor the history of the Church can justify the contention that Christianity is incompatible with the institution of slavery, yet nothing is more certain than that the principles of the Gospel are absolutely contradictory of the principles of slavery, that this contradiction has expressed itself from the first always in the amelioration of the slave's condition, often in his manumission, finally, in every part of Christendom, in the condemnation of slavery as inconsistent with discipleship, and intolerable to the quickened sense of Christian fraternity. You must distinguish between the institution and the circumstances under which it works. As an institution slavery takes its place

among the various forms of social order, not a high place indeed, but still a place. Christianity is compatible with every type of social order, but there were circumstances connected with the institution which Christianity could not tolerate. The torture, mutilation, and slaughter of slaves, the denial to them of legal marriage, the separation of families*—these were incidents of Roman slavery which the Church has from the first resisted, and almost invariably condemned. So you must not judge the attitude of Christianity towards slavery by the law-book, whether civil or ecclesiastical; legislation is not the Church's method of social work. There were no doubt many enactments passed in the interest of slaves, which reflect the growing influence of the Church, but these never until comparatively modern times proceeded to the length of condemning slavery. "The sudden abolition of slavery," observes an eloquent French writer,† who certainly does not minimise the antipathy of Christian principle and the institution of slavery, "would have reduced ancient society to starvation, for it entirely subsisted on the products of servile work. It would have thrown on to the soil whole populations, without guide, without resources, incapable of self-government, beings in truth equally destitute of the instinct

* v. GREGORY OF TOURS, *History of the Franks*, vol. iii., for a most revolting example of cruelty practised on his slaves by a certain Rauchingus. The story is quoted in a note by Neander, but it should be read in the original, which is very lifelike. (See p. 318 of Migne's edition, and for the well-deserved fate of the said Rauchingus, p. 488.)

† DE BROGLIE, *L'Église et l'Empire au IV^{me} Siècle*, vol. i, p. 306.

of the brute and the intelligence of man. More than one day was needed in order to give birth to and develop that respect for oneself and for others, that esteem for work, those sentiments of independence and dignity which make it possible for societies to exist by the exertions of unforced activity. The Church at that solemn moment (viz., the conversion of Constantine) accepted from God and from Constantine the task of emancipating the world without overturning it. It is for modern nations to say if she has kept her word."

To that appeal there can be but one answer. Christianity has destroyed slavery within its own borders, and is actually engaged in destroying slavery in the non-Christian world. When we examine the process by which this great result has been reached we observe that it has not been political and coercive, though politics and coercion have had their place in it, but a silent and gradual conversion of opinion. "The services of Christianity in this sphere," observes a very just and wise thinker, Mr. Lecky,* "were of three kinds. It supplied a new order of relations, in which the distinction of classes was unknown. It imparted a moral dignity to the servile classes, and it gave an unexampled impetus to the movement of enfranchisement."

The history of Onesimus illustrates the philosopher's words. In the Church this chattel, without rights and without respect, becomes at once important and honourable. The doom of slavery is

* LECKY, *History of European Morals*, vol. ii. p. 66, 11th edition.

pronounced when a Roman citizen can describe a slave as his "*faithful and beloved brother*." The self-respect prohibited by the State is discovered and secured in the Church. Whatever their legal relation to each other may be, both Philemon and Onesimus are and own themselves to be brothers in the family of God, disciples of the one Lord, heirs of the same hope. The better Christians they are the more real will their sense of equality become; manumission will follow upon discipleship as surely as the fruit upon the bud. Mankind may be compared to a stranded ship helplessly lying on the beach, from which all efforts to lift her are unavailing; and Christianity is the waxing tide which by gradual approaches covers the whole shore, and with silent but resistless force lifts the imprisoned vessel and floats it out of danger into the wide ocean. The words which her Divine Founder adopted in order to describe the method of His own ministry have a real application to the ministry of the Church. "*She doth not strive nor cry aloud: neither does anyone hear her voice in the streets. A bruised reed she does not break, and smoking flax she does not quench.*" It was a just sense of the real drift of Christian influence which made Constantine place the ceremony of manumission under the superintendence of the clergy. The Church always encouraged the setting free of slaves as a worthy and blessed act. * "It was celebrated at Easter, and although it was not proclaimed a matter of duty or necessity, it was

* LECKY, vol. ii. pp. 69, 70, popular edition.

always regarded as one of the most acceptable modes of expiating past sins. . . . Numerous charters and epitaphs still record the gift of liberty to slaves throughout the Middle Ages 'for the benefit of the soul' of the donor or testator. In the thirteenth century, when there were no slaves to emancipate in France, it was usual in many churches to release caged pigeons on the ecclesiastical festivals, in memory of the ancient charity, and that prisoners might still be freed in the name of Christ."

The moral of the history is twofold. On the one hand it counsels patience, on the other hand it teaches caution. Do not despair of Christianity because it seems to you scandalously tolerant of injustice. There is need to remember this counsel, brethren, in these days of eager social enthusiasms, when the zeal of discipleship seems to be out of all proportion to its knowledge or its wisdom. Christianity is the ultimate solvent of all tyrannies—social, political, moral; but it works its victories in silence by undermining in men's minds false principles and replacing them by true principles, by purging human judgment from the distortions of prejudice and sin, and by quickening the sympathies of human nature. The influence of Christianity is the power of the Holy Ghost—mysterious, unmarked of men, disbelieved, denied, yet wherever discipleship exists, there operative in ceaseless blessing. "*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"

And the history of the abolition of slavery may

well teach caution to those ardent disciples who are ready to reform the world by direct action in the name of Christ. The history of the past does not encourage such attempts. They are always made under the great risk of human error. The risk is the greater since they are always made by enthusiasts, and when did enthusiasm ever truly discern the signs of the times? It is difficult to see how slavery could have been abolished if the Church had done what, perhaps, we might have expected she would have done—condemned it root and branch. The nemesis of premature reform is reaction; and there is no lesson of history more certain than this, that there are no short cuts to righteousness, whether individual or social. One thing it is in the power of every Christian to bring to the help of his fellows, and that thing perhaps, the only permanently valuable contribution to social reform; it is the witness of a true life, governed by the Spirit of Christ and modelled on Christ's example. That witness, brethren, can be delivered in every age and under all circumstances, and wherever it is delivered wrong is rebuked and right is asserted. The Kingdom of Heaven is proclaimed by every Christian example; it is set up in human society wherever, in the name of Jesus Christ and for His sake, men and women serve their fellows and sacrifice themselves. It may seem nothing at the time; men may not apparently regard it, or they may regard it with hatred and contempt; the powers of wickedness may seem to hold empire with undiminished authority; but as surely as there is God in heaven, and that God both righteous and omnipo-

tent, it does not fail. The quiet witness of Christian living tells in the long run. I am not sure whether as much can be said of anything else. That seed cannot fail of its harvest in due season, for within it is the vital energy of Christ's life, and upon it rests the immortal purpose of Christ's witness.

NOTE.—It is perhaps necessary to say that, in speaking exclusively of the beneficent influence of Christianity upon the institution of slavery, I must not be understood to disparage other influences, notably the kindred influence of the Stoic philosophy. To this source must be attributed the noble edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines, which “extended the protection of the laws to the most abject part of mankind.” “*The jurisdiction of life and death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands, and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterranean prisons were abolished; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance or a less cruel master.*” [GIBBON, ed. Bury., vol. i. p. 40.] But legislation is very powerless against public sentiment, and philosophy seems to have had little general effect. Stoicism could appeal to the intellects of the few, but had no access to the hearts of the many. It needed Christianity to create a humane atmosphere in which merciful laws could operate, and to provide a charitable motive strong enough to defeat the pride of class and the tyrannous greed of ownership.

SERMONS TO WORKING MEN

A HARVEST FESTIVAL SERMON

Preached in S. Margaret's on October 4th, 1891.

“Man shall not live by bread alone.”—S. LUKE iv. 4.

THESE words—as you will doubtless remember—form the successful retort which our Saviour made to the first temptation of Satan. They are taken from the Book of Deuteronomy, where they stand in a connexion which sufficiently indicates their primary meaning. In the original passage Moses is represented as addressing an exhortation to the Israelites, in which he sums up the teachings of their recent history, and points his counsels by references to experience. *“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness, that He might humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know: that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.”**

The words rebuke that unthinking assumption

* Deuteronomy viii. 2-3.

that the sustaining gifts of Nature will, as it were necessarily, be forthcoming for the needs of men. The Israelites had to learn that behind those gifts, behind the regular methods of their ministration to men, behind the laws of Nature, as we call them, is the free and sovereign will of Almighty God. "*Man doth not live by bread alone*"; his life is sustained by no necessity of natural provision, "*but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live*"; that is to say, his continued existence is willed by God, and the divine will can secure its accomplishment by any means It wills to choose. If the regular methods cease, then It will provide the needful sustenance by new and, as we speak, miraculous methods. The manna in the wilderness, the desert-rock, the migrating quails, anything that is designated by the divine will for the task will suffice for the maintenance of man. "*Man doth not live by bread only, but by everything that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.*" The primary sense of the words is clear; but as we consider them in the text, as spoken by the Son of man in answer to the tempter of men, we perceive that they have a wider reach of meaning, that they state in fact a broad truth of human nature. We may consider the text in three ways, as (1) a statement of fact, (2) a warning, (3) a rebuke. These shall serve as the subjects of the several parts of our sermon.

I. "*Man shall not live by bread alone.*" We say that the words state a fact. The material requirements of man may be satisfied to the full, but

his well-being will demand something more, he will not be able to live as a mere animal. Let us give the widest possible meaning to the expression of the text; let us understand by "bread" all that belongs to man's temporal existence, all the arrangements, interests, enthusiasms, achievements which are suggested by, and determined by, and limited to his life in the world, and we shall discover, as a matter of fact, these all taken together do not satisfy him; that beneath and beyond these he has other needs, other interests, other anxieties which belong to an existence that is not temporal, and to a sphere of activity that is not seen. Consider that great and most significant fact of the universal religious sense: the fact that everywhere and always men lift up their hearts to some supreme yet scarcely-known Power, which they cannot see, or hear, or touch, and which yet holds them subject in a complete subjection. Why is it that man alone, of all the animals which dwell on the face of the earth, has within him a certain imperious principle, which sits in judgment on his actions, compels him, even against his will, to despise some conduct, and admire other, and impresses him with a conviction from which he cannot divest himself, that some day or other he will be required to give account of his actions? Of course I am not saying that this mysterious principle is equally vigorous, equally exacting in all men. The moral sense shares that diversity of development which belongs to the intellect and to the imagination, but in its essence it is everywhere the same; in the savage of the African forest, and in the

accomplished product of Western civilization, this common mystery of conscience finds place. Why is it that man does not, as the other animals with whom in physical form and function he is so closely allied, who share with him liability to disease, sensibility to pain, assurance of decay and death—why is it, we say, that he does not, as they, find final satisfaction in the ordinary activities of physical existence? Why is it that everywhere and always he reveals this mysterious hunger of the soul that will not be satisfied by material things? My brethren, the answer is to be found in the words of the text: "*Man doth not live by bread alone*"; his nature contains within it an element that is not of the earth, that may not be satisfied with the earth. He is the offspring of Almighty God, and however sunken in the scale of being, however set round on every side with circumstances the most depressing and unfortunate, however—we may add—deflected by his own wilfulness from anything that recognizes the supreme truth of his nature, man cannot, even though he try his hardest, cannot altogether part company with his higher self; the stamp of his divine ancestry is upon him, and it is perceptible even through the foul defilements of savagery, and superstition, and sin. Our text, then, asserts a matter of plain fact: *Man does not live by bread alone.*

2. But this fact, though unquestionable, is constantly ignored, and so we may regard its solemn assertion by our Lord as a warning which we shall do well not to disregard. The solemnity of that

warning is greatly enhanced when we recall the speaker and the occasion. Our Lord Jesus Christ was beginning His public ministry, He was setting His hand to the great task to which the voice of God had called Him, and He encounters at the very outset of His work the tempting suggestions of the Evil One. Satan tempts Christ to use unlawful methods to carry out His noble mission; he tempts Him to take low views of the human nature which He came to exalt, views which in face of the actual condition of the race sounded plausible enough, but which were, none the less, false views, treasonable against the very purpose of man's redemption; and our Saviour rebuts the Tempter by asserting the broad, grand fact of man's spiritual nature. However true it may be that the wide world over men are toiling to subdue and silence the witness of God within them; however true it may be that they are asserting with a reiterated audacity, which reveals their own perception of their error, that they are satisfied with material things; however true it may be, that as far as in them lies they repudiate and renounce the fact of their spiritual being; still, it is not true that they are the mere animals they seem to be; it is not true that they are all they can be and were meant to be; it is not true that they cannot again be recalled to the allegiance of their higher selves. Sunken as he is, hardened in iniquity as he is, gross and carnal as he is, basely ungrateful as he is, yet man is the child of God, and cannot altogether conceal the fact. "*Man shall not live by bread alone.*"

The reformation which Christ would bring to the world would not proceed on a low view of man's nature. It would start by assuming the best, and not the worst of him; it would begin by treating him from the standpoint, not of his material but of his spiritual nature; and, historically, we must acknowledge that the success of that reformation of men which Christ inaugurated has precisely depended upon that great initial method, which He laid down so solemnly in the presence of the adversary. It is because Christianity has taken a high view of men that it has found an entrance into their hearts; because it has refused to accept their own cynical judgment upon themselves that it has compelled them for very shame to rise above it. Christianity has been powerful and persuasive just in proportion as it has retained and manifested its Founder's spirit in this matter. Wheresoever the Church has become so affected by the temper of the world as to assume that the masses of people, or some races and sections of people, are too degraded for the faith of Christ, too stupid to apprehend the message of God in the Gospel, there and then the Church has found herself powerless to save.

And, brethren, each one of us may well take to heart this warning of Christ, and of Church History. In these days, especially when we are all devoting our thoughts to the great and pressing problem, how best to improve the characters of men, how—in the familiar phrase of the hour—to elevate people, it is well indeed that we should remember

that no scheme for improving the conditions of life, no project for providing ampler and more efficient education for people, no arrangements for securing them against the shock of misfortune and the suffering of poverty, can be adequate to satisfy the most profound and pressing wants of their nature; that if, indeed, we would raise men above their present condition: if we would ennoble their characters and enrich, with permanent and worthy interests, their lives, it must be by remembering that "*man doth not live by bread alone*," and by providing, first of all, for the satisfaction of those great spiritual needs, which, even when most forgotten and derided, make up the noblest elements in man's character. How sad it is to hear men speak as if the problem of human happiness would be solved if only a certain measure of material comfort could be assured to everyone, and the means of education and society set within everyone's reach. How sad it is to think that the politician and the social student so persistently forget or ignore the warning of Him who is at once the Author and the Redeemer of humanity. Why will they shut their eyes to that great fact of man's spiritual need? Why will they organize the satisfaction of everything else, and leave the satisfaction of man's religious want to the chapter of accidents? Yes, surely, brethren, we may recognize in the text a solemn warning of Christ to us men. In spite of the aggressive and overpowering character of the material life, in the confusion of politics and the dust of controversy, remember that the life of man does not find its adequate provision in any

mundane things, that "*man does not live by bread alone.*"

3. And then the text speaks home to each of us individually, reminding us that the general law holds good of us, and bringing our lives into judgment. So it is, as I said, a rebuke. It points reproachfully to our common conduct, in which—as it seems—every interest is recognized except the truest and the highest of all. And so it is, my brethren, that I have chosen it for my text to-night, because I desired to make an appeal to some of you on this very matter. Harvest-tide is the festival of the material life. We contemplate joyfully, and I hope also gratefully, the munificent provision which the bounty of the Creator has made for the due satisfaction of our bodily wants. We marvel at the vastness of the demand, to which the harvest of the world returns sufficient supply. This year the subject has been brought under notice in a special measure by the great famine in Russia. That vast country, which generally is able to contribute largely to the wants of other nations, is now menaced with, nay, is already groaning under, a great want. The newspapers have for some time past been full of accounts of Government action to arrest the progress of famine, of estimates of the national loss resulting from the failure of the crops, and of harrowing narrations of the popular misery. We have observed as it were in a picture the impotence of man against the forces of Nature; and the state of Russia has led many of us to interest ourselves more than in past years in the facts which govern the food supply of the

world. We have admired the relationship of mutual help, in which the most distant quarters of the planet stand to one another. We have shuddered at the mere thought of the disasters which would result from any extensive and violent interruption of those relationships, either by national jealousies working themselves out in war, or by any great diminution of the natural supplies of food. While, then, our minds have been dwelling on the material life of men, it may well have happened that we have tended to lose perception of the importance of the life that is not material: in our anxiety for the provision of bread we have been forgetful of the truth that "*man doth not live by bread alone.*" And so the text comes to us as a rebuke for our materialism.

But I would press the words yet more directly and personally. When we see people living without any thought or attention given to the things of God, when we mark their habitual neglect of the services of the House of God, their indifference to the claims of religion, their apparent absorption in secular pursuits, are we wrong in saying of them that they are acting on the contrary assumption to that of the text: they are acting as if man lived by bread alone, and needed nothing more? Take for instance the case of a tradesman. He is hard at work in the shop from Monday morning to late Saturday night, and when Sunday comes round he takes his pleasure: he sleeps long, he eats and drinks plentifully, he forms parties of pleasure into the country or to the seaside. Late on Sunday evening you may observe him

and his friends returning from their Sunday expedition in a condition of dreary hilarity, disturbing the town as they pass through it with their merriment or their profanity. Has not that tradesman forgotten the words of Christ ; is he not acting as if he had no spiritual needs at all ? Or take the case, more common with us than the other, of working men. We will suppose that they work at Beckton. It is hard work, no question ; but they are not long at it, and they are well paid. Between their shifts they get ample leisure, so ample, indeed, that many of them don't know what to do with it, and so stand idly lounging at the street corners, or sitting for hours in the public-houses. Sunday comes round for them also ; they hear the church bells ring out for service, but they never pay any heed to them ; all the morning they sit about indoors ; a walk in the afternoon and the public-house again at night makes up their Sunday experience. In the summer they sometimes attend meetings of the Union, hear much violent talk, and wash it down with much liquor ; or they spend the day at the seaside, or rather as near to the seaside as the public-houses permit.

Brethren, you know that is no overdrawn picture of the life of a great proportion of the working men of this parish ; and is it not a wholly material life ? is there any evidence anywhere of the recognition of the spiritual nature ? So the text is a rebuke to such lives ; it reminds them that there is another side of human nature than that which they contemplate. But, you are saying to yourselves, "they are gross and sordid folk, with whom we have nothing in

common. The public-house has no charms for us; we have too much self-respect to lounge about in obvious idleness. The preacher's warning is not for us." Nay, but my friends, not so fast, I have not done with you yet. Doubtless you are all that you say, but tell me what place in your thoughts has religion, as compared, for example, with your own getting on in the world, or even the highly respectable indulgences which you allow yourselves, and which are your equivalents for the public-house and the street corner? Would it be very unjust to say of you that your whole mind is filled with the interests, prospects, and hopes of this visible world?

"Man shall not live by bread alone." Sometimes the truth of these words of Christ is borne in upon the mind even of the most careless. Life in the common course and routine of it is full of warnings, full of solemn and significant events, which compel the attention of men to this great truth of their spiritual nature. When the sudden shock of bereavement makes secular pleasure impossible, where does the mourner turn for comfort but to that great symbol of all that is least secular, to the Cross of Christ? Even irreligious people turn as it were involuntarily to religion when the cloud of bereavement overhangs them. They do not find the world an adequate solace then. The calamity of illness, which compels a man to lie by in idleness and lonely silence, brings home to his mind the reality of the spiritual world. He is thrown back on his own resources, and if he is a mere worldling with no religious interests, with no conscious beliefs, with no

habits of devotion, he finds himself helpless and unprovided. The world seems a very poor thing to a sick man: it is a false friend that fails at need. How different is it with religion. Then is she most precious, when all things else lose power to interest. She whispers hope in the ear of the distressed, and sheds the fragrance of worship round the pillow of the sick. To the sufferer she brings patience; to the despairing, comfort; to the dying, courage. She does not wax feeble with declining strength, but holds up her torch of light and leading even to the end, when its beams mark the passage from time into eternity. It is religion, brethren, and religion only that will bring a man peace at the last. Then at least all will perceive, all will acknowledge that there is an element in man which cannot be satisfied with the world's business and pleasure, but demands a higher and nobler satisfaction altogether.

"Man shall not live by bread alone."

Brethren, I would dare to hope that this harvest festival may leave a deep and blessed impression on some of you. I would dare to hope that the entrance into this Holy House, which you have been induced to make at this time, will be the beginning of a new chapter in your lives. No longer will you continue to live merely for this passing world; no longer will you continue to neglect the House of God; no longer will you continue to separate yourselves from the prayers and praises of the Church of Christ; but, taught by the harvest, you will in the coming time bear ever in mind the solemn truth of your dependence upon

Almighty God ; taught by the harvest, you will not let slip out of memory that great and momentous day in the future, when the Judge of men will demand of you the account of your actions here. Taught by the harvest, my brethren, you will henceforth take a more responsible view of life—the view of men who know that the words and deeds, aye, and the thoughts of the present, are the unfailing factors of the future : that character is forming : eternal destiny is preparing, as all things that are great and permanent are formed and prepared—silently, unobtrusively, surely. Taught by the harvest, you will resist the seductions of covetousness, of self-indulgence, of ambition, and in the hour of temptation, when to you in your turn, as formerly to your Lord and Master, the Evil One brings near his subtle and malignant snares, you, too, will make answer, as did your Lord before you, successful, victorious answer in this stern and simple assertion of the spirituality of man : *Man doth not live by bread alone : but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

SERMON TO WORKING MEN

Preached on November 8th, 1891, in S. Margaret's, on the occasion of a Church Parade of the Gasworkers and General Labourers' Union.

“The labourer is worthy of his hire.”—S. LUKE x. 7.

THESE words were uttered by our Lord Jesus Christ in the course of His instructions to the seventy disciples, whom He sent as His envoys to prepare His reception in the towns and villages of Palestine. They probably formed a familiar proverb, expressing, as such proverbs generally do express, a principle of natural equity. Our Saviour applied the saying to the claim of His messengers to hospitality while engaged on their mission; but it is of general application, and as such will serve us to-day as a text for our sermon.

“*The labourer is worthy of his hire.*” The words have reference to one kind of life, the life of labour; they assert for the labourer a moral claim to fair compensation and recompense for his toil; they indicate a variety in the amount of such compensation and recompense; the hires must correspond to the value of the labourer's work. I said that the text asserted a principle of natural equity, and by that I mean that it commends itself as just and true

to the universal moral sense of men : that labour is the proper condition of healthy social existence ; that the recompense of labour is matter not of favour but of right ; that the character and amount of that recompense should have relation to the social value of the labourer's work—these are propositions, bound up in our text, which will not be disputed by any thoughtful man. It will not be denied that society is well-ordered or badly-ordered just in proportion as it endures the test of the text. Does the labourer receive the hire which his work merits ? or is society so organized that some labourers do not receive their due, while others receive more than they can rightly claim ? You and I will be at one in regarding these questions as properly demanding satisfactory answers in a well-regulated society. We apply the test of the text to the society of this country ; we try to answer these questions that we have propounded in reference to our own age and land. Is life so organized in England to-day that all labourers receive the due recompense of their toil ? Is the equitable principle of our text generally recognized among us ? Now there can be no doubt that a very strong and general impression exists that the answer to these questions is not satisfactory. Discontent is widely spread among the mass of citizens ; there is in almost every branch of industry a large measure of friction between employers and capitalists on the one side, and workmen on the other. The daily papers regularly contain an account of disputes and difficulties breaking out between—if I adopt the common expression—Capital and Labour. Now all this difficulty, dis-

content, friction, and uneasiness, must be regarded as witnessing to a very deep and general conviction that Labour does not receive its due reward in England to-day; and for myself, forming according to my poor ability a judgment on the matter, I cannot escape the conclusion that there is a very solid foundation for that conviction. I cannot conceal my own belief that under the existing organization of society many labourers do not receive the fair recompense of their toil, while some receive more than their due. I state this belief of mine thus clearly at the beginning of my sermon in order that you may be under no misconception as to the motive of my preaching.

I will assume that you agree with me that some labourers do not receive their due: we turn then to consider in what direction there is best chance of discovering a remedy for whatsoever injustice attaches to labour in this country. And here we are at once encountered by this difficulty, that the problem is so vast and so complicated that the mere understanding of it demands an amount of patience and information which but few people are either able or willing to give to the task. Naturally, when we come face to face with an injustice we are disposed to attack it without delay in the most direct way possible; and I am disposed to think that many of us are letting ourselves forget, in our zeal against injustice, the extreme difficulty of putting it right. Let us lay it down as an axiom that violent remedies are bound to fail of effect. In social matters the familiar saying is especially true, "Force is no

remedy." Let me make my meaning clear by a simple example, borrowed from a long distant age, which will serve my purpose without raising suspicions or resentments in any one. In the year 362 there was a great scarcity of corn in Asia Minor. The populous and important city of Antioch was grievously afflicted. Bread was at famine prices, and, as usual, there was fierce indignation felt by the multitude against the corn merchants and bakers, who seemed to be making gain out of the public misery. The Emperor Julian, who at that time was resident in Antioch, shared this indignation. He determined to redress the wrongs of the people by main force, and with this view he issued an edict fixing the price of corn, and requiring the corn merchants to sell at that rate. What happened? Instead of relieving the distress of the people he made it much more acute, for whereas there had been bread for sale before, though at high prices, there was now no bread for sale at all, and the well-intentioned but misguided Emperor found himself the object of universal detestation. Let us not repeat the mistake of Julian, and by only consulting our natural feelings make a bad state of things unendurable. The problem of the organization of industry is far too vast and complex to be solved by some easy and heroic method. Its solution, if it ever is to be effected, will be so only after long and patient effort, after many experiments have been tried, many failures endured, many ideals abandoned. But you will say, "However difficult the task may be, it is our duty as good citizens to attempt it.

It would be cowardly to acquiesce in wrong because the work of redressing it is hard." I entirely agree with you; it is the duty of every good citizen to labour as far as he can to cleanse society from injustice, only he ought to remember that it is not less his duty to do so thoughtfully and responsibly. Are there, then, any directions in which we may reasonably hope to find improvement? I think there are, and I will venture to name two—the association of labourers and the extension of ameliorative agencies. Let us consider these very briefly.

1. I am welcoming you in this House of God to-day as an association of working men; you are the members of a great Labour Union. I desire to make clear to every one of you that the Church of Christ entirely sanctions and approves the principle of association. It would indeed be strange if it were otherwise, for what is the Church but the greatest and oldest association in the world? The very principle of Church life is the social temper; the very sign of God in the Church is visible oneness. Do not suppose that the Church is opposed to the Union as such. It is not; it could not be. Whatsoever appearance to the contrary there may be must arise either from mistake on the side of the Church, or fault on the side of the Union. For the principle of association, which underlies all Labour Unions, the Church has nothing but approval. Having spoken thus clearly, I hope I shall escape from misconception if I point out to you three dangers which seem to me to beset such associations as yours. Association, unless it

be wisely ordered, easily passes into very narrow grooves, and when it does so, the best purpose which it serves is compromised. The great benefit of association is not only the force which belongs to combined effort, but also the educative influence upon the individual of social intercourse. Men naturally tend to take very contracted views of life; they are disposed to mingle in the narrow sphere of their own class, and thus, when they have to take action in public matters, they are prone to petty and unworthy lines of conduct. Association is adapted to check this. By bringing men into contact with others, compelling them to take thought for the views of others, association not only adds to their information, but it disciplines them in that readiness to subordinate personal inclination to general requirement, which is the very temper of good citizenship. How great is the need of such education at this moment a very little reflection will make clear. The local conditions of labour are so diverse, the circumstances of different industries are so various, that any sweeping project, affecting in an uniform way the whole area of industry, must bring stupendous disasters upon the country. The gasworker, whose employment is of the nature of a monopoly, must not suppose that the trade arrangements which suit him will be equally suitable for the cotton operative of Lancashire, whose industry is carried on under severe foreign competition; and the factory worker, whose toil is independent of weather, and daylight, and time of year, must not permit himself to

dictate to painters, and bricklayers, and agriculturists, whose opportunities of work are largely affected by climatic conditions. Association ought to educate labourers in the diversity of the local conditions of labour, and thus guard them against sweeping and, therefore, mistaken action. But this educative value of association is lost when association is limited to one class or type of workers. It then becomes the nurse of prejudice and the factory of folly. That is one danger of association. And the next is this. When men act in large bodies they are commonly swayed rather by passion than by reason; and thus it must be confessed that individual responsibility is apt to be forgotten by the members of an association. The member takes for granted the statements of his superiors, and advocates, often without understanding, the recommendations of his society. This disposition to suppress individuality in their members is the besetting sin of all associations, and certainly of Labour Unions. And the third danger is only an extension of this disposition—it is the danger of tyranny. My brothers, do not suppose that I attribute the desire to tyrannize to such societies as yours in any special degree. It is the temptation of all power, and, therefore, of that power which belongs to association. Tyranny is natural to man; the history of society is full of tyrannies; society to-day is penetrated with the tyrannical temper. But there is, perhaps, this distinguishing mark about the tyrannies of the present and of the future, that they are and will be exercised not as heretofore

by individuals, or small aristocracies, but by large multitudes. I cannot help thinking that this circumstance greatly adds to their danger, for the worst result of tyranny is not the oppression of the oppressed, but the corruption of the oppressor; and when tyranny is exercised by great multitudes the area of moral ruin is vastly extended. I implore you, my brothers, to set your faces against tyranny; do not allow yourselves to use methods which are not lawful. Be fair to those who do not see things as you see them. As you claim justice for yourselves, so be ready to concede justice to others. Of one thing there can be no doubt, viz., that nothing has so weakened the hands and thwarted the efforts of Labour Unions as this fault of tyranny. I implore you to remember that the best interests of labour are bound up in the jealous preservation of the labourer's rights; and of those rights none is more fundamental, none is more precious, than the right of independent thought.

I pass from association to what I have called the extension of ameliorative agencies; and I must explain the phrase.

2. Most of the disadvantages under which labourers suffer do not arise from direct oppression exercised by employers, but from circumstances over which employers have no control whatever. Thus the uncertainty of employment, which is not, perhaps, so great here as elsewhere, although it is very considerable even here, is unquestionably a grievous hardship; but it derives from causes which are mostly beyond the control of employers, or the action

of law. The high rents which working men have to pay, and which form a very considerable set-off against cheaper bread and clothing, derive rather from broad economical causes than from any deliberate action of the landlords, although, of course, there are extortioners among them as among the members of every other class in the nation. These impersonal economical causes are indeed difficult of treatment.

I am told that in some districts house rents have been raised since the passing of the Assisted Education Act just to the extent of the old school fees. It is impossible not to feel indignant at such a proceeding. It is a horrid fraud perpetrated on the poor; but clearly the ultimate cause of it is not the greed of the landlords (however great that may be, and in this case I do not hesitate to say that the landlord who knowingly adds the fees to the rent is a scoundrel), but that keen competition for houses which results from the overcrowded state of the towns. Under these circumstances, then, I apprehend that indirect action will probably effect most in the way of improvement. The means of a vigorous social life may be provided; the best results of medical science may be brought within the reach of the very poorest by the maintenance and extension of hospitals and nursing institutions; opportunities of thrift may be multiplied; and, perhaps, some kind of insurance against poverty in old age made possible on national security to all. And I do not think it is altogether chimerical to hope that some security against sudden loss of employment may be devised.

It has always seemed to me a great hardship that no compensation should be awarded to those workers whose reasonable expectations of employment have been abruptly disappointed by some change in the organization of their industry, such as the introduction of labour-saving machinery. Of course, it is true that in the long run the introduction of such machinery benefits working men. It is obviously a good thing that the severest kinds of labour should be performed by machinery; but while this is true in the long run, in the meantime great hardship is often inflicted on those whose occupation has been for the time destroyed. I think in equity they have a claim to compensation; but I confess I cannot see how such compensation could be assessed or levied. Yet something could be done even here by the introduction of longer contracts of employment, and something by the better technical instruction of the workers. The first would make transitions less sudden; the last would make change of employment more easy. I am very positive that the best interests of working men are bound up in security of employment. It is almost impossible for them to acquire and maintain the temper of citizenship so long as they are liable to sudden and frequent changes of locality and industry.

"The labourer is worthy of his hire." It remains for us to consider what is the function of the Church in applying that equitable principle to human society. I am the more anxious to speak plainly on this point because there is a tendency in some quarters to require from the Church a course of action which

she has no commission and no special qualification to adopt. Why does not the Church take in hand the task of regulating the relations of labour and capital? Why do not the clergy preach a crusade against the present organization of industry, and propound a better scheme of society for the acceptance of men? My brothers, these questions are commonly asked, and the view of the Church which suggests them is very widely spread. Nevertheless, I submit to you to-day that it is a mistaken view. The Church never received from Christ any commission to deal directly with the social and political arrangements of men. You may search the New Testament from end to end, and you will find nothing that can justify you in saying that Christianity requires one kind of government, one order of society, rather than another. On the contrary, there are many express warnings against interference with existing institutions. The clergy as such have nothing to do directly with political constitutions or schemes of social change, or projects of economic organization. Are they, then, strangers to the intensest interests of working men? Is their gospel so spiritual that it does not affect the course of terrestrial life? Is Christianity so much a matter of the next world as to be without value in this? No, my brothers; I beg you to believe that this is not so. The faith of Jesus Christ goes to the very roots of human conduct, and just because it does so it can afford to leave the details of conduct alone. Thus the Church affects the world not directly, but indirectly; not by prescribing a scheme of society, but by providing true principles of action. You have

an example of this before you. To-day you have been collecting money for the Victoria Park Hospital : it is an admirable object, and I congratulate you on its selection. But let me ask you, what was the source from which hospitals and similar institutions have come? It is a matter of notoriety that they have come from the source of Christianity. Yet you will find no commandment to build hospitals in the New Testament. What you will find is the new commandment of love to God working itself out in love to man. And that new commandment, just in proportion as it received the obedience of Christians, enriched human life with the various institutions of benevolence. So then the Church of Christ can truly claim to be the author of hospitals, because it was the Church of Christ that taught men first those lessons of pity and love which prompted them to build hospitals ; and however much men may hate and oppose the Church, they cannot, if they are just, deny that they owe the best gifts of civilization to her influence. You are working men, manual labourers : it is an honourable title, my brothers, than which there is none more honourable in the world ; but who made it honourable? My brothers, it was Jesus Christ. Before He taught men the majesty of toil, by Himself labouring in a carpenter's workshop, manual labour was looked down upon as a degraded thing, properly to be performed by slaves. But He changed all that, and by His example He bound His Church unto the end of time to honour manual labour. Remember, men, I entreat you, that if the Church seems to oppose the just claims of

working men, if ever she throws her influence in the scale of political or social tyranny, remember that she is acting in contradiction of her own gospel, in insult to her own Master and Lord. Remember, too, when you are disposed to think hard things of Christianity and to speak bitter words against the Church, that you owe to Christianity, to the Church, that dignity which all men agree to recognize in honest work.

And once more. You are very anxious to improve society : you are full of ardour to abolish its injustice and to relieve its misery. It is a righteous and a noble ambition, but, my brothers, there is a condition which must be fulfilled in every man before in any real sense he can reform the world. He must first reform himself. Ah, this is a hard truth I know, and one that men love to drive out of sight ; and one reason why men dislike religion and keep away from the House of God is because this hard truth is for ever being forced on their notice. But I would fain hope that to-day you will not refuse to face it. Believe me, the reformation of society is too sacred a work to be carried through by the unworthy. The kingdom of justice may not be built upon the foundations of prejudice and falsehood and class selfishness. Fraternity will not grow out of calumny and violence. The reign of Christ may not be set up by the weapons of Satan. No, no, the harvest shall truly reveal the character of the seed. It is the law of nature. It is the law of God. Social reformation, if it is to be permanent and thorough, must grow out of individual reformation. Of what avail

is it that men should be possessed of everything that can minister to their material comfort if they are all the while the slaves of their appetites? Better a thousand times that they should be poor, hard-worked, aye, cruelly oppressed, if they be in their minds and hearts free men, than that surrounded by secular prosperity they should be the bond-servants of sin. And it is just here that Christianity comes in. How shall a man gain control over himself? The drunkard, how shall he become temperate? and the hard, greedy man, how shall he become generous? and the selfish man, how shall he become unselfish? and the impure man, how shall he become pure? Those questions, believe me, go to the very root of the social problem, and the social reformer who neglects them is a charlatan and a fool. It is much easier to denounce society than to sit in judgment on one's own life; yet the last must come before the first if the denunciation is to be either honest or effectual. My dear friends, I ask you every one here present in God's house to-day, have you judged yourself? You who declaim against injustice, are you just? you who burn with anger against the profligacy of a peer, or the folly of a prince, are you pure and self-respecting? You who bitterly resent any condemnation of your aims and methods, are you careful not to denounce without knowledge, or accuse without opportunity of self-defence? Judge yourselves, my brothers, judge yourselves. That is the message of the Church to you: not a popular message, I know; but what has the Church to do with popularity? Christ was not popular: the multi-

tude shouted for His death. Is it likely that His Church will be popular? And yet, my brothers, I cannot find it in my heart to let you go away from this holy place to-day without a kinder word, a gentler message. Dear brothers, do not think that your sorrows and hardships, aye, and your mistakes and crimes, are not seen and marked by One who feels for you and cares for you as no one else can. No, no, near you, before your eyes, if you would but see it, stands Jesus Christ. Look at Him, my brothers, and observe Him well. He, too, is afflicted; the hand of society has been heavy upon Him; He is the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Pierced are His hands and feet and rent His side; His brow is torn by the thorn crown, and the blood-drops visibly declare upon His face the death-sweat of His agony. He is alone, for friends have failed from Him, and even foes have left Him to Himself. He is in darkness, for the night, the night of God, has wrapped Him round. Did ever earth present or heaven behold desolation so absolute, misery so profound? My brothers, do you ask me why it is that He hangs there on the cross? I will tell you. It is that you and I might be saved from our sins; it is that you and I might be enabled to overcome intemperance, and impurity, and hardness, and violence. It is that you and I might be made patient, and holy, and merciful. Dear brothers, will you disappoint Him? Shall His bitter sorrows be of no avail for you? Shall fresh outrage come upon Him at your hands? or will you bring to Him in His solitary passion the welcome offering of your

repentance? Will you, for His sake, lay aside bitterness, and anger, and injustice, and take up the labour of the world's reform, no longer proudly, no longer fiercely, but in the spirit of men who have been near the cross and caught the contagion of its resistless love?

SERMON TO WORKING MEN

*Preached to the Gasworkers and General Labourers' Union
at their second Church Parade, on the Twenty-first Sunday
after Trinity, November 6th, 1892, in S. Margaret's.*

“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, If any will not work, neither let him eat.”—2 THESSALONIANS iii. 10.

THESE words, perhaps, formed a proverb commonly used among the Rabbis, and probably familiar to the Thessalonians. ~~St.~~ Paul adopts them as his own when he desires to rebuke the vice of idleness which had made its appearance among his converts at Thessalonica. It is easy to see that the circumstances of the apostolic Church laid it open to the assaults of imposture and indolence in a measure greater, perhaps, than in any later age. Conversion to Christianity very generally entailed upon the individual calamitous consequences. Society frowned upon him; he probably lost his employment, and certainly found the obtaining of fresh work extremely difficult and, perhaps, impossible. We know that the early converts to Christianity were mostly drawn from the poorer ranks of society; they were, therefore, without any fault of their own, thrown into a position of helplessness which appealed, and with reason, to the charity of the Church. That charity

in those first days was indeed wide-reaching and self-forgetting beyond anything before or since. Even the "hard Pagan world" was compelled, in spite of itself, to observe and admire the mutual love of the disciples of Jesus. It was an admirable, an unexampled, an almost portentous thing. Ancient society, ordered from top to bottom on a tyrannous principle of inequality, could neither understand nor appreciate a social organization which rested on the assumption of equality. The Church of Christ, as we contemplate it by the side of the heathen society in the midst of which it had its beginning, seems like an oasis of beauty and fruitfulness in an arid and barren wilderness. All around ^{WERE} ~~are~~ hardness, cruelty, crowned and insolent oppression; here in these little Christian communities ^{WERE} ~~are~~ love, and sympathy, and manly self-respect. That is the aspect generally as we review the past from the vantage ground of a later age; but when we gaze more closely upon the scene, when we bring to bear the telescope of historical research upon the distant landscape, our first impressions are somewhat dashed and discomposed. We find that there was a very large element of prosaic, sordid humanity in the actual working of those Christian communities, which at first, and seen only from the outside, seemed so celestial. ^{BUT THIS} The generous charity of the Church, which aspired to give to the moral teachings of the Sermon on the Mount a faithful literal expression in practice, ~~which, perhaps, under the conditions of fallen human nature, they are not capable of receiving,~~ was abused by the incorrigible depravity of unworthy

men. The ~~holy~~ name of discipleship was made the cloak of indolence and covetousness, and *godliness* came in some quarters to be regarded as literally a "*way of gain*." In Thessalonica it would seem that another cause was operating in the direction of abuse. The notion that the return of Christ in glory was near at hand appears to have been common to all the early converts, and to have affected the apostles themselves. It was not an unnatural notion, in view of our Saviour's words on the subject, and where discipleship was in a healthy condition it led to no ill results, nay, it may have led to good results in quickening zeal and increasing vigilance; but where, as in Thessalonica, discipleship was not healthy, then these mistaken advent speculations bore prompt and evil fruit. Men turned away in disgust from those commonplace duties, the due performance of which is not only necessary to the order of life, but also valuable for the discipline of character. Giving themselves up to an excessive exaltation of spirit, and abandoning the straightforward pathway of daily duty, ~~men~~ ^{they} despised work and cast themselves for their maintenance upon the bounty of the Church.

2. Paul encounters them with the stern and simple rule of the text, "*If any will not work, neither let him eat.*" Charity loses all its beneficence when it merely ministers to selfish idleness; the wilfully idle man must be held to forfeit all claim to the assistance of his brethren. This commandment of the apostle gained new authority from his ^{own} character and manner of life. He was no hard and griping economist, but

a man whose heart overflowed with tenderness and sympathy. No one can read S. Paul's epistles with any measure of attention and not be impressed by his wonderful sympathy. He felt intensely for the wrongs and sufferings of others. "*Who is weak,*" he asks passionately, "*and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I burn not?*" And it was no wealthy and luxurious person who uttered this command to work. No one could throw it in the face of S. Paul that he was an idle man, or lived an easy life. It was a point of honour with him not to be chargeable, even for his bare maintenance, to the Church which he served. When he urged his converts to be industrious he could invite them to follow the example of his own action. So in this Epistle to the Thessalonians he appeals to the witness of his own life, "*For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us, for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you, neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's hand, but in labour and travail, working night and day, that we might not burden any of you; not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you, that ye should imitate us.*" Yes, if ever a commandment was recommended by the conduct of the man who issued it, this commandment of the text was recommended by S. Paul's. It was from a life full of arduous labour, of anxious care, of sustained suffering, that this law of work proceeded.

We have seen what was the primary intention of the text; we have noticed the special circumstances of the Thessalonian Church, which called forth from

S. Paul this prohibition of maintenance for wilfully idle persons; we must now go on to inquire how far the text has direct value for us English folks, who are living under conditions as widely diverse as possible from those which governed the life of the Thessalonians. I may take it as certain that you would not have asked me to preach on this text if you had not felt sure that it was relevant to your own life; nay, more, that it was in an eminent degree relevant. In that persuasion of yours I most entirely concur, and I think a very little consideration will make it evident that our text contains a message very necessary to our present circumstances, and very suitable to our present needs.

1. 5 In the first place we may observe that ~~the~~^{it} text asserts a great truth of human life, very obvious indeed, and yet very easily and very frequently forgotten: ~~I mean~~ the truth of the connexion between human work and human sustenance. It is one of the unfortunate results of the extreme complexity of civilized life that we lose sight of this connexion. It is difficult to realize that work is absolutely necessary for the "*daily bread*" of society, when our own work seems perhaps to have a very shadowy connexion with the provision of food. Men in society are linked together in a great organization of mutual help, and it is only by the frank and honest performance by each man of his own task that the well-being of all can be secured. Civilization has its foundation in human labour, and any confusion, or discord, or paralysis in the sphere of human labour disorders and imperils civilization

itself. Work is the duty of man, the right thing for him, the very condition of his best development. Nothing is so degrading as continuous idleness; that ideal of the future, which cuts work out of life, is an immoral ideal, as well as an impossible one. It is because work is thus necessary and wholesome that it is of such cardinal importance that its conditions should be just and healthy. Anything that tends to make work disgusting to the worker is a grave peril to the body politic. J

And here let me remind you that what I am saying applies not to one kind of work more than to another, but equally to all work. WE MAY REMIND OURSELVES THAT THIS
KINDS OF
It is not uncommon to find among those who call themselves "working men" a notion that the only kind of work that deserves the name is manual work. They are loth to allow that the men who work with their brains are to be accounted workers at all; and, indeed, this is suggested by their use of the phrase, "working man," not as meaning generally the man that works, but specifically the man that works with his hands. I feel very sure that this notion is not less unfortunate than it is untrue. It leads men to the habit of thinking about themselves separately from their fellows, as if they had distinct, and perhaps contrary interests; and thus it directly stimulates that class-suspicion which broods like a nightmare upon all things true and generous. All work is equal, if only it be honest: the work of the hand and the work of the head. J
The quiet student, patiently accumulating knowledge and giving it popular expression in books, and the laborious traveller collecting, often

at the risk of his life, the information which but for his efforts had perhaps perished for ever ; and the seeker after knowledge passing the years in the laboratories of experimental science, that he may wring from nature some more of her secrets for the enlightenment, or the physical healing, or the heightened pleasure of the race ; and the statesman, divining the courses of the future, and taking thought long before for the needs of the nation ; and the teacher, ministering to every generation in turn the treasures of secular knowledge ; and the priest, carrying into the world's life the witness of the Unseen, the Gospel of Eternity—all of these, brethren, are truly working men, truly your allies and comrades in the warfare of life, never rightly separated from you in thought, as surely never in interest. The real enemy of all workers, whether they work in a factory, or in a shop, or in an office, or in a study, or in a school, or in a legislative chamber, or in a parish church—the real enemy of all workers is the idle man who will not work. It makes no difference where in the order of society he finds his place. He may be one of that unhappy class of men, falsely called gentlemen, who spend the days God gave them for honest work in hanging about West-end clubs and other haunts of idleness, killing the “impracticable hours” with all manner of sin and folly ; or he may be one of those incorrigible loafers—the shame and weakness of manual workers—who will not work, but who will “demonstrate,” as the phrase goes, and destroy for those who merit and need it the belief of men in the distresses of

poverty. It makes no matter where the idle man finds his place in society, rich or poor, cultured or ignorant, he is the enemy of his fellows, a rebel against the foundation law of human society.

And in the second place our text indicates the true basis of any claim which men may make upon the support of their fellows. As an honest worker, as one, that is, who has not failed to bear his just share of the world's burden, who has contributed his fair proportion to the general effort which has created and sustains society, as such a man may appeal in his time of need without loss of self-respect to the assistance of his comrades. He has the right of a soldier, wounded in battle, to the care of his country, whose cause he has maintained. He asks to be allowed to eat in his time of want, because in his time of strength and opportunity he has worked. There is necessarily a give-and-take in society; at every turn we have to make appeal to the kind consideration of our fellows; we are all under obligation to one another; we are all one another's benefactors. It is absurd for any to take honour to himself as if he were independent of his fellows; there is no such thing in the world as such independence, it is the impudent fiction of conceited selfishness.

"None of us," writes ~~the incomparable~~ S. Paul, "*none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself.*" It is true; and we are, in the full sense of the term, "*members of one another.*" But the important thing for every one of us is to remember and to fulfil the practical duties of this position.

The assumption underlying the mutual dependence of men in society is the universality of work. It is, ~~as~~ said, a "give and take": alas! that some should take all and give nothing. It is well for us to remind ourselves that the moral right to take of the good things of civilized life depends upon the fact that we have honestly given our best efforts to providing them. The idle man, rich or poor, cultured or ignorant, has no claim on the bounty of his fellows, because he gives them nothing. He is a worthless drone, to be despised and abhorred of all honest workers.

My brothers, I am conscious that as I speak to you many of you are silently raising a protest, which, perhaps, might be put into some such words as these: "It all sounds very well, this gospel of work and mutual help, but in actual experience it is all very different. There is gross inequality in the division of wealth. Some men are so rich that they can scarcely reckon their riches, and others so poor that the bare necessities of life from day to day are scarcely within their reach. Work is, doubtless, man's duty and his best interest; but work is not accessible to many, who desire nothing more than to be allowed to work. Idleness is infamous, but in their case it is compulsory. Society as it progresses becomes ever more complicated, more wealthy, more cultured, but it gathers about it an increasing multitude of workless people—its victims and its foes—who suffer in habitual want for no fault of their own, but only because, mysteriously and unaccountably, there is no use for them in the world." There is much truth in such a protest, and that man's heart must be hard

indeed which does not feel its pathos. For myself I know no spectacle more afflicting and more terrible, none that haunts me so painfully with a sense half fearful, half guilty, as the spectacle of honest men eager to work who can find no work to do. I try to put myself in their position, and I wonder at their patience and self-control. It does not seem to me anything strange or scandalous that they should think bitter thoughts and speak hard words about society. The wonder is that they are not more bitter and more hostile. Nor do I feel disposed to greatly resent their denunciation of the Church, and of the clergy in particular. It does seem a wretched result of centuries of Christian teaching that society should be what we know it to be; and we clergy, I own it with shame, have not always been either as sympathetic or as self-sacrificing as our sacred character most rightly requires that we should be. But, my dear brothers, there is danger lest in our natural sympathy for the undeserved sufferings of those who can get no work to do we should fall into exaggeration. Bad as things are, and I will be no party to any minimizing of their badness, I do honestly believe that if you review the course of events during the last fifty years you will find that on the whole the position of the working classes, as they are called, has steadily improved. Public opinion has wonderfully changed, and the change has all been in their favour. A much juster sense pervades society generally, and I do honestly think the desire is deep and strong among the great employers of labour to act fairly by the men they employ.

But the solution of the social problem is only very partially in the hands of individuals, whether rich or poor. Employment must depend on the demand for English manufactures, and that upon the markets of the world. The competition between nations is extremely and increasingly severe, and any increase in the cost of production, whether from greater expenditure in wages or from hostile tariffs, or from any other cause, handicaps production most seriously, and perhaps altogether prohibits it. It seems to me that working men do not make sufficient allowance for these facts; they have, following but too faithfully the lead of men who, in some cases, it is to be feared have a direct interest in social disturbance, tended to regard the issue between their employers and themselves as a simple matter of natural hostility, to be solved by an appeal to force. I am convinced that the loss inflicted upon the working classes by unjustifiable strikes has been enormous, and I cannot help thinking that unless a more accommodating and reasonable spirit gets possession of those who have the guidance of working men, unless these ruinous strikes are—as they easily might be—averted, there will be inflicted upon English trade grievous and irreparable injury. At a time when the out-of-work difficulty is becoming acute, I do think working men should ask themselves very seriously whether the present habit of striking, often for very slight cause, is either prudent or justifiable. I do not deny that there may be occasions which justify a strike, but I think they are very, very few, and becoming fewer every day. A strike under present circumstances is

a very serious thing. Grievous suffering is inflicted on wives and children ; bitter feelings are stirred up between neighbours ; tyranny, even violence, is exercised by working men over their fellows ; the relations between employers and employed, whose interests are really the same, and who ought to be the best of friends, are rendered permanently hostile ; trade is disorganized, and, perhaps, altogether driven from the country. When I recall all these evil accompaniments of a strike, I feel that the man who advises or instigates his fellows to that course of action undertakes a truly fearful responsibility. My brothers, you will forgive me for speaking so strongly ; you know that I desire your welfare ; you will believe me when I say that it is because I am convinced that the miserable jealousy between employers and employed is a grave misfortune for both that I have ventured to address you in such plain words. It is a time of unrest, the air is full of disquieting rumours ; it is said that the winter upon which we have entered will be a bitter time for many working people. My brothers, in view of this prospect will you bear with me, while in all affection and earnestness I implore you to suffer the shadow of your comrades' sorrow to rest upon your own lives ? I speak to you men who have fixed employment. Is it a time for thoughtlessness, for self-indulgence, for excess, when your fellows are in want ? What would you think of men in a hard siege, when the scarcity of provisions was great, who, themselves possessed of sufficient stores of food, wasted them in gluttonous self-indulgence, while their neighbours perished of want ? Would

you not denounce them as unspeakably infamous? My brothers, is it less infamous that at a time of social distress, when men are desperate for lack of work, and women and children are fainting for hunger, there should be working men, aye, and working women, who are not ashamed to waste their money in drunkenness and sin? O, I beseech you, be temperate this winter time; be self-masterful; be self-forgetting. Live in the temper of men who are face to face with a great and sorrowful problem, and who mean, by the help of God, to solve it. Suffer, if it must be, in the temper of men who have gained a view, though distant, of the Cross of Calvary, and who know that suffering, if but it be bravely borne, saves the world.

SERMON TO WORKING MEN

Preached on November 12th, 1893, at the third Church Parade of the Gasworkers and General Labourers' Union in S. Margaret's.

“Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”—COLOSSIANS iv. 1.

IT is at once the strength and the reproach of Christianity that it takes men as they are, and proposes to regenerate them without first insisting upon some revolution in their circumstances. When our Saviour was on earth the objection commonly urged against Him derived from His frank acceptance of average human life as the platform of His reformation of men, and through men of society. “*The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.*” It jarred against men’s idea of a social reformer that He should thus place Himself in frank contact with average human life. The spirit of the Master passed upon His disciples, and we find in the epistles just that same acquiescence in the ordering of society that marks the record of the evangelists. The communism of the Christians in Jerusalem is no real exception to this general attitude of the Church, for it is sufficiently manifest that it was dictated by consider-

ations of practical need at the moment, and had no reference to any general principles subversive of society as then constituted. It certainly did not prove more than a short-lived success, and beyond the references in the book of the Acts it left no trace on the subsequent life of the Church. The passage from which you have chosen the text is an admirable example of this acquiescence of discipleship in the ordering of contemporary society. S. Paul, in the preceding part of the epistle, has been dwelling with devout ardour on the sublime mysteries of revelation, and here, in the concluding chapters, he is bringing those mysteries into direct relation with the positions and duties of common life. He first declares the tempers which properly belong to discipleship, and then he submits certain practical objects upon which those tempers should find exercise. *"Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any: even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye; and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness."* These are the dispositions and motives which are to determine the conduct of disciples, and the sphere of their exercise and influence is to be found in the normal relationships of life. S. Paul selects the most important and familiar of these relationships to illustrate his argument. Wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, masters, are successively exhorted to show forth the graces of discipleship in their several stations.

Now, before we can apprehend the bearings of your text upon our own lives we must realize the actual force of the words in S. Paul's day. We shall find that in their literal meaning they have reference to a state of society which has long passed away. It is, I think, very unfortunate that the revisers had not the courage to place their marginal rendering in the text of their version; had they done so we should have realized at once the chasm which parts the application of the apostle's counsel at the time when it was given, and any application which it may be found capable of receiving now. The text would have read thus: "*Lords, render unto your bondservants that which is just, and equality; knowing that ye also have a Lord in heaven.*" You are at once reminded that the institution of slavery was then in full vigour. What we understand by "*masters*" and "*servants*" had no place in the thoughts either of the apostle or of the Colossians to whom he wrote. At the basis of ancient society was the institution of slavery, and it is deeply significant that S. Paul clearly regarded even that institution as competent to be the vehicle and expression of Christian discipleship, so real to him was that independence of circumstances, which is the essence of Christian equality. Now, when society is constituted on the basis of slavery it is obvious that its well-being depends to an incalculable extent upon the unfettered will of individual slaveholders. According to the laws of Rome, power of life and death was possessed by the owner over his slaves; they were mere chattels and, as such, could have no rights. The owner might oppress them, subject them

to torture, slaughter them for his amusement, starve them to death when they were past work, and they had no redress. The law shut them out of the category of human beings. The one only check upon the master's freedom was his interest, and that was but a poor resource against the malignant cruelties of tyranny, or the recklessness of pleasure, or the fierce outbreaks of passion. Therefore, the apostle in addressing himself to the slaveowners was going to the root of the social ills of the ancient world. But if S. Paul were face to face with English society to-day, would he have directed his appeal to any one class of the community? Are there any of whom it may be said with truth that upon them depends the misery or happiness of multitudes? Who are the successors of the slave-owning lords and oppressed bond-slaves of the text? What do justice and equality mean to us now? Has the solemn fact that we have a Master in heaven any value as a motive governing conduct now? These are the questions to which I propose in my sermon to seek the answers.

I begin by rejecting the attempt to fasten the character of "*masters*" upon any one class of the community. The truth seems to be that in varying measure we are all masters and all servants. No section of society can now determine the weal or woe of the whole. You will, perhaps, object to me the case of large employers of labour, upon whose will apparently depends the provision of work, and therefore, of happiness for the multitudes of the artizans; but I make answer that individual em-

ployers, though they have considerable immediate power, are really destitute of the authority they seem to possess. Personal pique may induce an isolated employer here and there to inflict suffering upon the people he employs by arbitrarily closing his factories, but in the mass employers are themselves controlled by the general laws which govern the production and distribution of wealth. And the individual helplessness of employers is nowhere more manifest than in the fixing of wages. Here and there, where production is more or less a monopoly, and, therefore, released from the control of general economic conditions, it may be possible for an employer to determine the earnings of his workmen, but speaking generally employers are not able to do this. They pay, and must pay, the wages which the state of the market permits. This fact has an important bearing upon our understanding of those familiar but formidable words, "justice" and "equality." I suppose there are no words so often on the lips of men, and none so various in the meanings they receive. What do we mean by a "just" wage? Some will answer by an expression which I observe has recently acquired considerable notoriety: a "just" wage is a "living" wage, sufficient to enable a man to live in decent comfort. But I make answer that under some circumstances of trade such a wage would be too much, because it would necessitate a cost of production in excess of what the market could permit, and under other circumstances the "living wage" would be too little, because when the gross profits of production are abnormally high it would seem

plainly equitable that the proportion paid in wages should be correspondingly increased. In that case not a "living wage," but a "comfort wage," or even a "luxury wage," would seem required by justice. I am aware that those who use the expression I have referred to generally link it on to the proposition that "wages are to determine prices, and not prices to determine wages." The proposal is to determine an arbitrary wage sufficient for the decent living of the workman, and to constitute the payment of that wage a first charge upon production, the fixed element in prices. Putting aside the not inconsiderable difficulties which emerge into view directly we attempt to decide the principles by which a "living" wage is to be determined in any given industry, and the methods by which those principles are to be applied, I submit that the proposal ignores a foundation truth of economic science, viz., that the supreme influence in fixing value is, and must always be, the desire of men; and that price is nothing more than the accepted register of value. "No labour of our own," writes a great living statesman and economist,* "whether of hand or of brain, or of both combined, can by itself put that stamp upon them [*sc.* the things we possess], or put that virtue into them. And even when by the desires of other men that virtue has been put into anything we have made, or into anything which we have acquired, it can be taken away again and be destroyed for ever by a mere change in their tastes and fashions. . . . It is in the consumer, and not in the producer, that the ultimate

* The DUKE OF ARGYLL, *Unseen Foundations of Society*, p. 51.

result of value lies." If, then, a "living wage" should require such an increase of prices as should alienate the consumer and direct his desires into new channels, it would seem certain that the attempt to determine prices by wages would result in failure. The supreme authority in fixing wages must ultimately be the market, which is only a convenient expression for the desires of men, and their power to satisfy them. As far as wages go, that must be *just* which the market permits; anything beyond that is a matter of generosity, anything below of oppression.

I do not anticipate that any reflective and instructed man will dispute the truth of all this, but it will yet remain true that economic laws work over wide areas, and sometimes require considerable time for their working. It is also true that economic laws have sometimes to assert themselves through very defective systems of trade; and those who describe as radically defective the system under which the coals raised from English mines are conveyed to the consumer, cannot be denied to have considerable justification for doing so. It is in these circumstances that there must be recognized the source of the lamentable industrial conflicts which at intervals desolate society. Ultimately it is indeed true that the market, that is, the desires of men and their ability to satisfy them, will determine wages; but at the moment, while the verdict of the market is yet doubtful, or while the real verdict of the market is concealed by the vicious system through which it has to be expressed, it will continually be possible both for employers and for workmen to make

mistakes, it will always be possible to stir up suspicion, it will not rarely be found extremely difficult to avert protracted and ruinous disputes. It would seem, therefore, that the urgent need of our existing state is some competent authority to interpret the market, and on the basis of that interpretation to adjust wages. Such an authority, in order to be competent, must be independent, well-informed, continuous, and accepted. As under modern conditions physical coercion is impossible, the only power available for enforcing its decisions will be the power of the general opinion. It will thus be a matter of vital moment that the interpreting authority should be able to securely and constantly count on the support of the general opinion. Whether it is possible to devise such a Board of Arbitration or not it is hard to say; but I think we may at least agree that it is our bounden duty to make the attempt. No one with any intelligence can observe such an industrial conflict as that which is now convulsing society in the Midlands, and not perceive that the certain evil results enormously outweigh the possible good results. The country will suffer heavy loss whichever party wins the day; but this is a very insufficient view of the position. No one with any heart can reflect on the prolonged and acute suffering inflicted, not only on the miners, but also on the workmen in numerous other trades, without feeling an imperative duty laid upon him to do what he can first to terminate this woeful contest, and then to seek permanent security against such contests in the future. Two things, at least,

appear manifest enough. On the one hand, there ought to be an end of all mystery as to the facts of production, and on the other, impossible aims ought to be frankly abandoned.

I cannot help thinking that this most miserable mining dispute had its origin mainly in the first, and owes its continuance mainly to the second. Speaking merely as a citizen, not professing any special right to pronounce judgment on economic matters, and certainly not claiming any special knowledge about the existing dispute, but interested as every good citizen must be in the just conduct of trade, I assert my belief that if three months ago the coalowners had taken pains to justify to the men the unquestionably serious demands which they made upon them, if they had then been as ready to make public the accounts of their collieries as they have since shown themselves to be, the actual bearings of their original proposals would have been better understood by the men, and possibly by means of conference or arbitration a dispute might have been averted. So far I certainly blame the coalowners; but now the contest has passed into a new phase. Proposals have been made which, fairly considered, amount to an offer to submit, not only the actual point at issue, but also the whole subject of wages in mines to arbitration. Those proposals are encountered by a demand which, however plausible, and I admit to the full its attractiveness, is, as far as I can see, opposed to the relentless facts of economic science, and therefore impossible. To fix wages, and by consequence prices, independently of the market, is to fly in the

face of economic law and to ensure defeat. It must be remembered that if a "living wage," that is, a wage determined apart from the market, is justly claimed by miners, it may with equal justice be claimed by every other class of workmen. The rule must apply to all or to none. We may test its competence for universal application by considering the case of the most necessary and numerous class of workers in the country—the agricultural labourers. They are known to receive wages below the very worst ever paid to miners, they have to work often under very unfavourable conditions, they are still, in spite of much improvement, the worst housed class of the community, yet in spite of all they are conspicuously well-conducted and law-abiding.

If a "living wage" may be claimed for anybody, it is for the toilers on the land. But if the claim were admitted, does anyone doubt that the immediate and necessary result would be the increased price of bread? Ultimately it would involve a heavy protective duty on foreign corn, and all those miseries of privation with which, before the repeal of the Corn Laws, the multitude of English artizans were so unhappily familiar. Fuel is scarcely less needful than food, and dear coal is not much less calamitous than dear bread. A "living wage" for miners, secured in defiance of the market, means dear coals, if there is such a thing as economic law, and involves a rigorous system of protection. Coal, it is said, is the foundation of English industries. Yes, but that means cheap coal; if but a fraction were added to the price of coal the vast

iron industries, already sorely pressed by German and Belgian rivals, would be unable to hold their own. The ruin of the iron industry would swell the host of unemployed men by a multitude of workers, whose claim to a "living wage" is just as good as that advanced by the miners. All this must be remembered when the subject of cheap contracts is under consideration. If a "living wage" in mines means starvation in ironworks, it is surely worth while pausing before that cry is adopted by English working men. Protection could not stop at coals; it must soon extend to everything else; and it could not be long before the result would be reached here which has already been reached in America, where the increased prices of the necessities of life more than outweigh the artificially increased earnings of labour. It is hard, I know, to think of these things, when the cry of want is in our ears; but I should be a false friend to you, if on an occasion when you have directly asked me to speak on these subjects I kept silence upon matters which, however unpopular, are of the very first importance. I have said nothing, though I might say much, of the grave responsibility attaching, at this juncture, to the refusal of arbitration. The great cost of coal is just beginning to be felt as a hardship by myriads of working people in every part of the country, and if severe winter weather sets in, as is not unlikely to be the case, acute sufferings will be caused. These inevitable consequences of prolonging the contest cannot and ought not to be absent from the minds of the leaders on either side. Personally I think that nothing short of the

plainest necessity can justify refusal of arbitration, and that in this case such necessity does not exist. More than that I do not wish to say; less I could not honestly say. I only hope that the event will falsify my fears.

So far I have spoken exclusively of wages, and I have maintained that individual action has little real influence in fixing their amount; and if wages constituted the sum of the duties which masters owe to servants, I should have reduced the practical value of your text to nothing. But who will maintain that wages, in the usage of the market, form more than a part of those duties? Beside the economical there is the moral relation between the master and his servant, and while the latter cannot alter the former, it can and ought to operate as a most beneficent influence upon the lives of both masters and servants. Nothing can be clearer than S. Paul's intention to require a direct result from the master's discipleship upon his relation with his servants. However difficult the application of Christian principles to the facts of economic life may be, it is the business of the Church to insist upon the duty of such application. If it be true, as it most certainly is, that the market determines wages, and that no amount of Christianity in the employer can enable him to pay higher wages than the market permits, it is not true that wages exhaust the functions of mastership. Employers cannot pay arbitrary wages, but they can establish a reign of justice in the organization of their industries; they can banish the curse of favouritism from the system under which men are taken on to

work ; they can recognize more fully than is now the case the equitable claims of long service and broken health ; they can make an effort to understand the needs of their men, and, so far as possible, to satisfy them ; they can immensely improve the conditions under which work is carried on ; they can, and if they are Christians they must, regard their workmen not as mere machines, but as associates and comrades ; and when once this is the case generally, an enormous extension of the area within which the co-operative principle is applied to production can hardly fail to result. As politicians they can, and if they are Christians they ought, to legislate with a direct view to improve, so far as legislation can improve—and, remember, legislation is powerless against economic law—the conditions of life and work ; in one word, they can, and if they are Christians they ought, to create a Christian atmosphere in which economic law can work. This, I submit, is the true influence of discipleship upon society. It does not propound any one type of organization, but it breathes into any and every type its spirit of justice and self-respect and mercy. As the ages pass society is subject to a process of evolution. It may be that the system which has shaped modern life will give place in its turn to some other system better suited to the requirements of men. The worst system is not too bad to be Christian ; the best is not so good as to be able to dispense with Christianity. Systems count for less than the spirit by which they are worked ; and though it is unquestionably true that the Christian spirit necessarily has tended, and must

tend to create social and political institutions compatible with itself, it is never to be forgotten that this work has throughout been gradual, and, so to speak, unconscious.

I have spoken so much about employers, partly because the circumstances under which we are assembled force into prominence the place they hold in the order of social life, and partly because they possess, in greatest measure, that authority over others about which your text speaks. But I am sure we shall gravely err if we limit the apostle's exhortation to one class of the community. In varying degree we are all masters and we are all servants, and S. Paul's words come home to us all. We are to be just and equal in exercising that authority over others which we possess. We must guard against the besetting sins of power—tyranny and favouritism. How extensive is the misery that derives from these two types of abused authority few people suspect, and none can fully know. Working men are organized in a vast hierarchy; after all has been done that can be done, in the way of simplifying relations—getting rid, as you would say, of the middle man—it yet remains true that in a great community like ours organization will necessitate an elaborately articulated system of dependence. Employers are only one grade in the hierarchy of production and distribution. Superintendents of all kinds, from the managing directors of great companies employing thousands of men and dispensing imperial revenues, down to the humblest

workman who has a lad set under him, are all truly "masters," and as such subjected to the besetting temptations of men in authority—tyranny and favouritism. S. Paul bids us be just and equal, and he advances a consideration which shall both strengthen our will and enlighten our judgment. "*Knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*" With that Master there is no respect of persons, there is no abuse of power. He has set His own witness in the hearts of men, and that witness delivers unfailing protest against every kind of injustice. "*The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.*" The still, small voice of conscience is the whisper of the lips of God, and he who disobeys his conscience rejects the mandates of his Maker. Remember, my brothers, that as the commands of God are thus addressed separately to every man, so will every man be required to give a separate account of himself to God. Oh, it is a truth easily forgotten in the rush of work and the excitement of politics. We live in crowds; we work in crowds; we think in crowds; yes, but when the life is ended, and the work is done, and the busy thought has ceased, the crowds vanish, and we are alone. Alone we must die, alone we must face the Judge.

None of us can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him. The reformation of society depends, so far as we are concerned, upon the reformation of ourselves. Not all the powers of the universe can make us do wrong until we ourselves give the word of consent; not all the powers of heaven can make us good until we ourselves will

to be good. In the last resort the supreme decision rests with us. Ah, my brothers, that were an appalling truth, if it declared the whole of God's message to man; but it is far otherwise. Give but your will, and all the powers of heaven are enlisted in your service. In discipleship your life attains a new greatness, a new purpose; you are engaged in the same conflict with the forces of evil as that in which He, the Lord and Master, evermore contends. His victory is the pledge of yours. My brothers, I know of no pledge besides worth having. Let the dreams of the social enthusiast be fulfilled, and by some unimaginable miracle let all the time-worn tyrannies of the race vanish from the earth they have cursed so long, and what will have been gained, if from the hearts of the emancipated millions there are to stalk forth into the world the same lusts and hatreds which worked the former ruin? Is it not clear that the labours of politicians can but touch the fringe of the problem of human woe? There is need of a power that can enter into the secret places of the heart, and purify there in its source the stream of human action. My brothers, that power is religion, and He who wields it is Jesus Christ. He makes appeal to you, who feel the burden of the world's evil, and would fain put your hand to the task of redress, and He proposes to you His service as the means, His example as the guide, His presence as the reward of labour. "*I am the Light of the World; he that followeth Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the Light of Life.*" But most of all He addresses Himself to you, not as social

reformers, but as sinners, and He bids you find in His obedience the peace of pardon, and the grace of goodness. “*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.*”

SERMON TO WORKING MEN

Preached at the fourth Annual Church Parade of the Gas-workers and General Labourers' Union in S. Margaret's, November 11th, 1894.

“Behold, the hire of the labourers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out : and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.”

S. JAMES v. 4.

S. JAMES of Jerusalem wrote his epistle at a time of grievous social trouble. All we can learn from other sources of the state of Palestine confirms the truth of the dark picture drawn by the inspired writer. The country groaned beneath the burden of the grossest misgovernment. The Roman procurators were the worst specimens of a class of officials which bore an evil name. To suppress every patriotic movement and to gather wealth for themselves were the guiding principles of their policy. A reign of bribery was established ; the popular discontent, deprived of any legitimate expression, showed itself by a rapid increase of brigandage and the rise of the sect of the Assassins. The record of Josephus is melancholy reading. Of Albinus, one of the procurators, we read that “Nobody remained in prison as a malefactor, but he who gave him nothing.” Of Gessius Florus, his successor, we learn that his avarice and tyranny were so shameless

that by comparison Albinus was looked upon as extraordinarily law honouring.*

"Whereas Albinus wrought his wickednesses at least in secret, Florus was impudent enough to parade them openly. The robbing of individuals seemed to him quite too small. He plundered whole cities, and ruined whole communities. If only the robbers would share their spoil with him, they would be allowed to carry on their operations unchecked." Rich men could buy themselves out of legal control; nay, they could even buy the support of legal authority for their worst excesses of oppression. An example is recorded by Josephus, when Ananias, the high priest, openly seized the tithes of the poor priests, reducing them to such straits of want that some perished of hunger. When it is remembered that the general conscience was most sensitive about matters relating to the priesthood, we can understand how utterly disorganized this incident reveals society to have been. There was another reason for oppression. The wealthy classes, unchecked by law, and thrown back altogether upon their own moral resources for restraints to the besetting sins of their position, were largely Sadducees. Whatever Sadduceanism may have been at an earlier time, it seems now to have degenerated into coarse and cruel materialism. The moral forces of the wealthy classes were sapped by unbelief. Uncontrolled, irresponsible, unbelieving, they gave free rein to the tyranny and pride, which must always be the shadows of privilege and wealth.

* v. SCHÜRER, *The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, vol. ii, p. 190. [Clark's Theological Library.]

The poor are always the greatest sufferers from political misgovernment. We can see that they depend more than others upon the protection of public justice; they cannot buy justice, for they have no money; therefore, whenever venality prevails, the poor are oppressed. The bitter words of the distracted king in the great tragedy become true of such justice as there is:

"The usurer hangs the cozener.

Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it."

This was the case in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago; it has been the case in many lands before and since that time. The most vigilant foes of corruption in every form should be the poor. Especially obnoxious to the wealthy classes in Palestine were the disciples of Christ. They were for ever speaking of conscience, of duty, of judgment to come. They were the advocates of truthfulness, of equal dealing, of honesty. The feelings of the rich towards the Christians are wonderfully expressed in the Apochryphal Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, a work composed nearly two hundred years before the time of S. James.

**"Let us lie in wait for the righteous: because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings: he upbraideth us with our offending the law, and reproacheth us with sins against our discipline. He professeth to have the knowledge of God: and he calleth himself the child of the Lord. He was made*

* Wisdom ii. 12-16.

to reprove our thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold, for his life is not like other men's; his ways are of another fashion. We are esteemed of him as counterfeits: he abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness: he pronounceth the end of the just to be blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his father."

S. James reminds his readers of the persecuting zeal of the rich. "*Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme the honourable Name by the which ye are called?*" He had taken deeply to heart our Lord's teaching as to the spiritual misfortune of riches: he believed in the beatitude of poverty. He looked upon the vexed society around him, and he saw clearly that it was near a great catastrophe. The spirit of the ancient prophets of Israel stirred within him; his mental vision was cleansed and extended by divine inspiration; he proclaimed the punishment of the crimes he witnessed to be at hand. "*Go to, now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are rusted; and their rust shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have laid up your treasure in the last days. Behold the hire of the labourers who mowed your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth out: and the cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived delicately on the earth, and taken your pleasure: ye have nourished your hearts in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one; he doth not*

resist you." The murder of S. James himself was a fearful proof of the justice of this denunciation. The prophecy found exact fulfilment a few years later when the nation of the Jews was scattered, and its polity for ever destroyed by the armies of Rome. The downfall of Jerusalem is the comment of history on the Epistle of S. James.

The particular oppression, which is denounced in the text, was the subject of a Levitical prohibition. "*The wages of a hired servant*"—so runs the law—"*shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.*"* In spite of this enactment it is evident that the evil remained very prevalent, becoming acute in times of political disorganization when the executive of the law became dangerously weak. Thus the Prophet Jeremiah, whose position in the corrupt kingdom on the eve of the Babylonian overthrow is very similar to that of S. James in Judea on the eve of the final destruction of the national polity, denounces in vehement language this very oppression. "*Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by injustice; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not his hire*";† and a later prophet, Malachi, rebukes with great severity "*those that oppress the hireling in his wages.*"‡ The son of Sirach, whose teaching at this season is heard in the daily services of the Church, speaks on the subject with an emphasis and a solemnity which indicate very clearly the prevalence of the evil in his time. "*Whoso bringeth an offering of the goods of the poor sacrificeth the son before his father's*

* Leviticus xix. 13. † Jeremiah xxii. 13. ‡ Malachi iii. 5.

*eyes. The bread of the needy, the living of the poor—he that taketh it away is a man of blood. A sacrifice from plunder is an offering of blemish; and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire is a blood-shedder.”** These are solemn words which claim and receive the sanction of our consciences. It will be an evil day when they are treated as unmeaning—no longer relevant to the circumstances of life. Do you speak to me of the economic forces which determine the conditions of trade? Are you striving to justify your hard bargains—your contracts which no honest labourer could accept, and which are nothing more or less than a cynical bid for dishonesty—by the laws of political science? You miserably deceive yourself. Those laws may, and do, determine much; they do not, and just because they are laws they cannot, justify wickedness. You know, and I know, that when full allowance is made for the action of economic law there yet remains a sphere within which your will can freely operate. You have some work on hand—some cottages to build, shall I say? and you hope to get a profit on your outlay. It is very well; but what shall the profit be? We know what a fair profit is; it is the profit which permits you to pay the average price for materials, the standard wage for labour. Yes; but here is the temptation. By taking advantage of the carelessness of authority, the ignorance of the public, and the bitter needs of starving or nearly starving men, you can get your cottages badly built of bad materials for a price which no honest contractor

* Ecclesiasticus xxxiv. 20–22.

could propose or accept. Does political economy justify that contract? Emphatically no. Does the law of Christ sanction it? A thousand times no. You may be a very respectable, aye, and a very religious man as the world counts; you may go to your public worship on Sunday with sanctified aspect amid the obsequious homage of your fellows; you may even throw your offering into the collection with a clang that would have distinguished the trumpet-sounding Pharisee; but I tell you, as the messenger of God in the Lord's House, you have a curse against your name in the book of eternity. Am I denouncing imaginary sins? No, brethren; I am delivering the witness of my own eyes and ears.

Wages must stand for the recompense of labour of every kind. The profits of the shopkeeper are his wages, just as much as the weekly earnings of those who are commonly called "wage-earners." Shopkeepers—and by that phrase I understand the whole company of those who work in shops—have just as great a share in our text as those who are wont to call themselves working men. My dear brothers, I fear some of you forget this. I have known several, I think I may say many, cases of small shopkeepers who have failed in their business, sometimes very piteously, losing their whole savings, the garnered fruit of years of toil, because they have been robbed by the customers whom they trusted. "Ah, sir, if I could get the money that's owing me I could hold on, but they've had the goods, and now they won't pay"—that has been said to me by poor folks, failing in their little shops, often with

tears running down their faces. My brothers, is this an imaginary evil? I tell you I am declaring the witness of my own eyes and ears; and I should be a false friend to you and a disloyal ambassador of my Lord if I did not declare it. "*Kept back by fraud*"—yes, it is always so; none plays the tyrant avowedly; even those cruel Sadduceean landowners, we may be sure, never stated their conduct quite in these terms. They had their excuses, we may be certain: after all, since society had reached so grievous a state of anarchy, the poor must be oppressed, and better by them than by foreigners. A wretched plea, surely, and yet something to come between the conscience in its repose and the hard, sleep-hindering fact upon which it must rest! It is ever so with fallen man. He dresses up his faults in some disguise, which shall prevent him from seeing himself as he is. Caiaphas, glowing with professional resentment against the severe prophet who so sternly bared to public gaze the hypocrisies of his order, fierce with hatred against the pure Teacher, whose crystal righteousness seemed a continual censure upon his own pride and avarice, veils to himself his murderous motives, and talks in the strain of the patriotic statesman about the public welfare, "*It is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.*" Ananias, when he lied to the Holy Ghost and brought a part of his money, pretending to give the whole, never suspected, or at least never realized, his conduct. I am very sure that he laid down his fatal gift with a fine feeling of virtuous sacrifice warming

his heart. The eyes of God saw through the outward pretence, through the comfortable self-delusion, through the admiring regard of the congregation to the fact of blasphemous, blinding self-seeking which lay below. "*Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*" I spoke of the excuse which some men strive to manufacture out of political economy. "I must buy my labour in the cheapest market," and so forth, when, if they were honest with themselves, they would confess that the motive of their action was not economic necessity, but sordid covetousness. Others will disguise their greed under the appearance of a zeal for their families. They must make provision for their families, they say. It is a hollow pretence. Their families suffer from their covetous conduct. The standard of character is lowered in the home, the children grow up to despise their parents, whose manifest sharp practice revolts their conscience; the curse of God abides on the accumulations of oppression.

And working men, are you free from these fatal hypocrisies? When I hear a man speaking very violently against landlords I suspect that he has been recently "flitting" with a few weeks', or even months', rent against him. A bad workman is said to abuse his tools; he certainly abuses his employers. You see how the text cuts all round; as I have said to you many times before, it is impossible to make the Bible into a party-book. If you treat it honestly and thoughtfully you find that its principles of conduct apply to all human action. When we allow ourselves to use the Bible as a weapon of party-warfare we

injure ourselves and degrade the Scriptures. Yet ever must we be on our guard against such use; for the temptation to it is strong, and we have a rare faculty of self-delusion.

"The cries of them that reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." S. James, alone of New Testament writers, uses the ancient prophetic title of God—Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts. We are told that this name first came into use in the period of the Judges. This is not without significance. That period was anarchic, *there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.* It is not surprising that the devouter Israelites fixed their minds on the idea of a righteous and powerful God, who was the exact contradiction of the contending rulers of earth. They looked to heaven for the justice and order they despaired of getting in the world. The phrase is characteristic of the prophet Isaiah, in whose acknowledged prophecies it occurs no less than forty-nine times. It is in the writings of that great prophet that its full meaning can best be discovered. "With him," says one, "God is first the infinitely High and then equally the infinitely near. *The Lord is exalted in righteousness!* Yes, and sublimely above the people's vulgar identifications of His will with their own safety and success, but likewise concerned with every detail of their politics and social behaviour, not to be relegated to the Temple, where they were wont to confine Him, but by His prophet descending to their markets and councils with His own opinion of their policies."*

* G. A. SMITH'S *Isaiah*, vol. i. pp. 9, 10.

This fact of the Creed—that above the life of earth there exists the Almighty God, vigilant, rendering to every one according to his works—is a lesson needed by every generation, by every man. The circumstances of life have widely changed since S. James wrote the text. We live in a society which has for centuries enjoyed an order, peace, and liberty which the ancients could scarcely imagine. Yet never was the cry for justice so passionate in its earnestness, so strenuous, so sustained. In this ordered, peaceful, free England, enjoying a material prosperity unexampled in the world's history, there is a vast throbbing discontent, which, the more it is studied, is found to resolve itself into the demand for justice. That this should be so is a remarkable evidence of the power of Christianity in stimulating the sense of personal self-respect in men. So far I hail the discontent as the necessary fruit of Christ's teaching, and therefore the promise of future good. At the moment, however, there is danger lest this powerful sentiment shall be directed to wrong ends, captured by selfish interests, and dissipated. It is easy to raise bitter prejudices between classes; it is very difficult to allay those prejudices when once they have been raised. Possessed of the franchise, the discontented multitudes may readily translate into political action the antipathies which they cherish. A commercial nation has to act with a view to circumstances which have no interest or importance for an agricultural community. We, English people, cannot afford to try experiments. Even a slight forfeiture of trade threatens us with social disaster.

Before all things, then, we need to approach economic questions without passion ; we must avoid exasperation ; we must bring to our treatment of political questions a great sense of personal responsibility. These are the conditions of just conduct, and we are agreed that the yearning of the multitude is for justice. S. James points us to the Lord of Sabaoth, whose eyes are upon the actions of men, whose ears are open to their cries. Rich men are to remember this ; perhaps since riches minister a larger liberty of action and secure a dangerous immunity from censure, they stand in special need to remember it ; but surely all men, however placed, if they are to escape the stain of injustice, must remember it also. Indeed, I have sometimes reflected that the working man, almost more than others, ought to be on his guard against the decay of his sense of responsibility, for the circumstances of his life compel him more completely than other men to merge his individuality in his class. We cannot see any better method of political action than that of association. The Trade Unions are the best-approved means known to our experience at this moment for securing to the working man in our commercial society his fair share of the proceeds of industry. In vast constituencies like ours, where the voters equal in number the citizens of historic states, it is manifest that combination must play a large part in the organization of politics. These are necessary consequences of the national position, but though necessary, they are not on that account cleansed from the perils which attach to every subordination

of individuality. There is a danger that the sense of personal responsibility will grow weak, and men contract the mental habit of shifting their obligations upon some or other association. This danger affects us all, but none so strongly as you who are working men. Therefore I ventured to say that you specially needed to keep watch against it. The best protection against irresponsible action—whether on the part of wealthy persons or on that of poor ones—is a living faith in the Lord of Hosts. The man who acts dishonestly or oppressively acts as if there were a fool on the throne of the universe, instead of an almighty and all-righteous God.

The test of religion is in the practice of life as the test of love is obedience. You value the affectionate words of your children; but you measure their love by another standard. You require them to do what you command, and act with a view to your will. So it is with Religion. Here in this House of Prayer the children of the Heavenly Father come to tell out their love in prayer and praise, to hold communion with Him, to learn His mind, to get an understanding of His will; but it is out there in the busy world, in the scenes of work, in the engagements of leisure, in the competition of business, in the warfare of politics, that the proof of their love must be given. Do not make the shallow error of those who despise public worship. The nature of man is so constituted that, apart from religious observance, it cannot remain religious; but while avoiding that error, do not fall into the deplorable blasphemy of those who would confine religion

to public worship, and drive the thought of God out of the concerns of secular life. The Lord of Hosts will not be worshipped by the men who forget him in their common life. The message of the prophet Amos is for such. *"I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from Me the noise of thy songs: for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."**

You want justice. It is a generous demand; but if you would make it to any purpose you must begin by making sure that you yourself are adding nothing to the oppression of the world. Injustice in society is only the expression of the fact that injustice reigns in the hearts of the citizens. Do not under-rate your own power. There is a witness which every man delivers; an influence which every man exerts; an effect which every man works. The atmosphere of life is poisonous or wholesome in proportion as that witness is true or false, that influence pure or polluting, that effect good or evil. The best method of fighting the wrongs of the great world is by doing battle to the death with the wrongs of that little world which surrounds every one of us. When justice is set up in the home, in the lobby, in the shop, in the committee, in the meeting, it will be impossible to set barriers to its triumphant progress; it will spread its contagion of blessing over

* Amos v. 21-24.

the whole face of society, it will lay hold of and transform the most repellent and unpromising conditions of life, it will be a cleansing baptism of heaven upon the care-seamed brow of humanity.

Yea, Truth and Justice, then,
Will down return to men,
Orb'd in a rainbow ; and like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering ;
And heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

APPENDIX

THE C. S. U. POLICY OF WHITE-LISTS

THE C. S. U. has recently issued a paper on "Exclusive Dealing" (*i.e.*, "*the practice of purchasing goods only from tradesmen who observe the standard regulations for each trade*"). It is signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Society, and must be assumed to be an authoritative document. It deals with (1) principles, and (2) methods. After stating that "*the importance of the moral pressure of public opinion in determining the conditions of industry is now generally recognized*," and insisting on the need of "*a well-informed public opinion*," in order to secure the efficiency of legislation, and the influence of the trade organizations, the paper lays it down that "*something more is required than what can be accomplished by the law, even when supported by public opinion*." The "*ultimate blame*" of "*sweating*" is attributed to "*the general body of consumers*," whose "*avidity for cheap bargains*" ignores moral limits.

Then follows this paragraph :

"The duty of the Church in this matter is quite plain. On the one hand, the law of the State represents the standard of morality to which at any

particular moment it may seem possible to compel all citizens to conform, if need be, by physical force. On the other hand, the Christian law, *enforced only by spiritual sanctions*, represents the ideal of moral conduct at which the Christian conscience and a lively sense of duty would prompt us to aim. *The Church of Christ has still the right, or rather the duty, of 'binding and loosing,' of declaring with authority what must and what must not be done.* The commission given to the apostles has never been revoked, and it can be exercised in other ways than by decrees of councils. That it should be exercised is a pressing need of an age when all men alike claim freedom of judgment and have equal political power. That we may in our measure be enabled to recognize it we must seek anew the insight, the faith, the courage, which a vital acceptance of the Incarnation will bring to us."

In this remarkable paragraph it may, perhaps, be worth noting :

1. The sphere of the direct action of the Church is assumed to be identical with that of the State.

2. The "*spiritual sanctions*" which alone enforce the Christian law, include (α) "*the moral pressure of public opinion* ; (β) the "*protection*" of obedient tradesmen from their "*less scrupulous rivals*"; (γ) the coercion of the latter by withdrawal of custom, and by the obloquy attaching to their exclusion from the "*white-lists*."

3. The "*Church of Christ*," with power of "*binding and loosing*," is identified with any voluntary association of Christian people.

4. The said power is held to cover direct interference in the sphere of economics. It confers on a private society, such as the C. S. U., the right of "*declaring with authority what must and what must not be done*" in reference to such practical matters as wages, hours of work, conditions of employment, etc.

5. The diffusion of "*political power*" is advanced as a reason why the "*Church of Christ*" (i.e., the C. S. U. or any similar association) should exercise the unrevoked Apostolic Commission to bind and loose, understood in this practical sense.

6. It is assumed that only lack of faith in the Incarnation can explain the failure to "*recognize*" the soundness of all this.

The "*methods*" of applying these "*principles*" are reducible to the single counsel to form "*white-lists*," i.e., "*public lists of tradesmen who observe the standard regulations in each trade.*" But this proceeding is not altogether easy. Where the trades are already organized there is not much difficulty. The "*Trades and Labour Councils*" will publish lists for the use of the C. S. U. and the public in general. "*In these instances the C. S. U. simply provides a social conscience, possessing a sense of moral responsibility in regard to the purchase of goods, and then appeals to the practical men of business, both employers and employed, to provide information as to fair and proper standards.*" But where the trades are not organized, the C. S. U., "*or any other bodies of consumers,*" must undertake "*the whole responsibility of issuing such a list.*" "*This would involve a careful investigation of the conditions of work in each trade, the formulation of a code of rules,*

and consultations with both employers and employed in regard to the practical effect of the regulations proposed." Some "successful" experiments are then referred to, and the paper proceeds :

"In conclusion, the Executive would urge all branches of the C. S. U. to undertake some practical work of this kind. The experience already gained shows how much can be done even by a small group of people who are really in earnest about their Christianity, who have been at some pains to see how their principles are meant to apply to the conditions of industry and commerce, and who are prepared, if necessary, to make some personal sacrifice in order to be true and just in all their economic dealings." I do not dwell on the latent arrogance of this assumption that the practical proposals of C. S. U. can only be set aside at the peril of discipleship, I prefer to point attention to the actual meaning of those counsels.

The policy thus boldly avowed by the Executive is no child's play, and it would seem to demand in those who shall translate it into action large and patent claims to the public confidence. But do those claims exist? The C. S. U. consists of thirty-one branches with 166 officers. Of these eighty-five are clergy, and ten are ladies. Of the Executive, which includes fifteen persons, no less than twelve are clergymen. There is ample security for character and devotion in the names, but little or none for that wide acquaintance with industrial conditions, that intimate knowledge of particular trades, that practical good sense, that cool judgment, which are

the first essentials of a wise treatment of economic problems. But even if the individuals were as manifestly adapted for their self-appointed task as they are manifestly the contrary, what of the task itself? Unless I utterly misread the signs of the times, and wholly miss the lessons of my own experience, the attempt to carry out the C. S. U. programme involves—

1. An unwarrantable interference with individual liberty.
2. A large neglect of clerical duty.
3. A further lowering of the already low standard of clerical learning.
4. A considerable impetus to the forces (already too strong) of social coercion.
5. Much hypocrisy.

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